U.S. Consumers Haunted By Higher Prices This Halloween, Nielsen Reports

Contributed by Nielsen
Monday, 27 October 2008
Last Updated Monday, 30 March 2009

Â October 21st 2008 - Schaumburg, IL

Consumers to Buy More Than $1.9 Billion in Candy This Halloween Season

U.S. consumers are likely to be spooked by higher prices this Halloween, as candy and costume accessories are up in price compared to last year, according to The Nielsen Company.Â Costume hair coloring products show the greatest increase, averaging $4.42, which is up $2.46 or 126 percent versus the same period one year ago1.Â Candy sales average $3.59, up $0.10, while chocolate candy sales average $4.22, up $0.172 .

â€œFor many consumers, the most frightening part of Halloween may be higher pricesâ€• said Tom Pirovano, director of Industry Insights, The Nielsen Company.Â â€œThat said, few parents will deny their children the fun of dressing up and trick-or-treating, so we expect sales to remain strong.â€•

The eight-week period leading up to and including Halloween accounts for nearly 90 percent of costume hair coloring annual sales activity and approximately 25 percent of false eyelash and accessory sales.Â More of a year-round seller, false nails and nail decorations rack up only 15 percent of their annual dollar sales during the Halloween season3 .

Goblinâ€™ Up the Goodies

Itâ€™s not Halloween without candy and U.S. consumers expected to purchase more than $1.9 billion in candy during the Halloween season, with chocolate candy accounting for $1.2 billion of Halloween candy sales and non-chocolate candy accounting for nearly $672 million4 .Â Halloween generates the greatest sales volume of sweets for the entire year.

â€œDespite the wide varieties of candies available, thereâ€™s no doubt that chocolate remains king,â€• said Pirovano.Â â€œC
miniatures, in particular, experience a high surge of sales around Halloween that is hard to match other times of the year.â€•

More than one-third (35 percent) of total annual sales of chocolate miniatures take place during the Halloween season, according to Nielsenâ€™s analysis.Â Likewise, 36 percent of non-chocolate miniatures, 25 percent of lollipops and 18 percent of bubble gum sales occur during the same time frame5 .

Wait . . .Wait. . . Buy!

Whether procrastination or an attempt to get the best deal, consumers tend to wait until the last minute to purchase Halloween candy.Â From early October to Halloween, weekly candy sales more than double - - from $196 million to $436 million6 , with the most candy sales occurring on October 28.

Top October Candy Buying Days

1. October 28
2. October 27
3. October 30
4. October 21
5. October 31

Source: The Nielsen Company, Total U.S. All Channels, October 2007.

â€œIn todayâ€™s tough economy, itâ€™s very possible we will see more consumers waiting to buy candy, as budget conscious
consumers wait for the biggest bargains.â€• said Pirovano.Â

1. Â Based on four week period ending August 9, 2008 versus the same period in 2007 in U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser stores, including Wal-Mart.
2 . Based on the 52 week period ending August 9, 2008 versus the same period in 2007 in food, drug and mass merchandiser stores, including Wal-Mart.

3. Based on the eight week period ending November 3, 2007 in U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser stores, including Wal-Mart.

4. Based on the eight week period ending November 3, 2007 in U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser stores, including

Wal-Mart.

5. The eight week period ending November 3, 2007 showed chocolate miniature sales of $408.9 million, non-chocolate miniature sales of $38.2 million, lollipop sales of $54.1 million and bubble gum sales of $21.6 million in U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser store, including Wal-Mart.

6. The week ending October 6, 2007 showed $196 million in total candy sales in U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser stores, including Wal-Mart, while the week ending November 3, 2007 showed $436 million in sales.