

Hershey Beefs Up Workforce, Leadership to Grow Salty Snacks Unit

The CPG seeks managers to guide planning, shelving strategy and overall category growth.

By **Shefali Kapadia** | February 8, 2023



Hershey plans to add employees and executives to its salty snacks division to support the growing segment, company leadership told analysts on the CPG's Q4 earnings call last week.

"One of our key strategic goals this year is really to integrate [and] scale our salty business," CEO Michele Buck said on the call. "And so, we are adding some incremental talent there to really make sure that we have the right skill sets."

Hershey's careers page lists around 300 open jobs, and a handful are specifically dedicated to growing salty snacks.

Some of the talent will be in supply chain, while others will focus on "improving our planning system," Buck said. This year, Hershey aims to transition salty snacks to its new ERP system, a move that will require talent with technology know-how. The CEO said the hiring initiative would not involve merchandising or front-line sales personnel.

Hershey has already appointed company veteran **Kristen Riggs** as president of the salty snacks division. Riggs has been with Hershey for 17 years and most recently served as SVP and chief growth officer.

The CPG also seeks a senior manager of salty business model strategy. The person would lead planning related to fulfillment and supply chain, with the goal of making Hershey a top-three player in salty snacks.

The CPG's salty business, with brands such as **SkinnyPop**, **Pirate's Booty** and **Dot's Pretzels**, has steadily grown since Hershey acquired those brands. While the confectionery unit remains the Pennsylvania-based firm's largest money maker, the salty segment surpassed \$1 billion in sales in 2022.

Snack giants, such as **Campbell Soup Company** and **PepsiCo's Frito-Lay**, bring in more revenue than that in just one quarter. But Hershey's quarterly salty sales (\$272 million in Q4) are not far behind **Utz** (\$362.8 million in Q3), which currently holds the No. 3 spot in salty snacks.



Kristen Riggs, president of salty snacks, Hershey (Photo courtesy of Hershey)

Related Content

February 2, 2023

Hershey Breaks Record With \$10B in Sales, \$1B in Salty Snacks

January 6, 2023

2023 to Test Hershey's Salty Snack Momentum

Salty snacks continue to be a lucrative business as many consumers swap out meals in favor of snacks. Dollar and unit sales grew last year, per **NielsenIQ** data.

As Hershey capitalizes on snack growth, it also aims to expand distribution and household penetration of salty snack brands. Buck previously noted that the CPG had ample opportunity to expand distribution of **Dot's**, which is a North Dakota-based pretzel brand.

Last week, Buck reiterated the need to expand salty snacks in stores and households.

"We continue to have some level of distribution upside, especially on Dot's," she said. "And we'll see some of that growth continue as we go through '23."

To that end, Hershey is hiring a category management consultant for Kroger and a customer sales executive for Kroger and its Harris Teeter chain. Among the key responsibilities for the management consultant is to "Identify Best-In-Class distribution and shelving strategies for Salty Snacks to drive overall category growth and capture fair share for Hershey Salty brands."

Hershey's hiring push comes as many firms — in the CPG industry and outside of it — are laying off workers or offering buyouts. But the U.S. did add 517,000 jobs last month, and unemployment is at its lowest rate in more than 50 years.

Some CPGs are laying off employees in some units while hiring in other areas. PepsiCo, for one, is laying off hundreds of workers in North America, but Frito-Lay aimed to hire 10,000 across sales, warehouse and supply chain roles.

A Hershey spokesperson did not specifically address whether the CPG is planning layoffs or buyouts. But the representative did say the CPG is "hiring hybrid and remote employees across various disciplines and company offices as we scale our Salty Snacks business through the Spring," in an email sent to CPG Specialist.

CPG Specialist is a copyrighted publication. CPG Specialist has agreed to make available its content for the sole use of the employees of the subscriber company. Accordingly, it is a violation of the copyright law for anyone to duplicate the content of CPG Specialist for the use of any person, other than the employees of the subscriber company.