

DS Group's Pulse Candy Becomes A INR 750 Crore Consumer Brand

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The Dharampal Satyapal Group (DS Group), a leading FMCG conglomerate and multi-business corporation, has announced a significant milestone for one of its popular brands, Pulse. Pulse candy recorded over INR 750 crore at consumer price in the FY 2024-25 translating into 750 crore Pulse candies being sold in one year making it India's largest distributed hard boiled candy. This achievement establishes Pulses strong market leadership in the hard-boiled candy segment for the last 9 years and its sustained appeal to consumers.



Mr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, DS Group

Over the past three fiscal years, Pulse has registered an impressive Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15% against a CAGR of 9 % in the hard boiled candy segment industry. This consistent growth in revenue highlights the brands strong pull across both urban and rural markets, especially when the broader market dynamics have not been as buoyant. According to market data, Pulse candy currently holds a 19% market share in India's hard-boiled candy segment and has been growing consistently. This significant share, achieved in a highly competitive landscape, reflects the brands strong consumer pull and high repeat purchase rates. In the initial years following its launch, Pulse candy prioritized the establishment of robust distribution thrust, focusing on both expansion and deeper market penetration. Today, the distribution system has evolved significantly, becoming far more robust and efficient. This enhanced system optimizes inventory flow, expands customer touchpoints, and improves market responsiveness. This results in a mature and well-managed supply chain.

"DS Group's vision for Pulse, a leading Indian ethnic confectionery brand in India, is to evolve it into a multi-

format, multi-occasion offering. We plan to achieve this by strategically moving into adjacent product categories, exploring innovative new formats, and capitalizing on the rich tapestry of regional flavors. Our consistent focus on brand building, enhanced consumer engagement, and achieving deeper market penetration will help us maintain our leadership position. We're aggressively pursuing both domestic and international markets for expansion. On the domestic front, we're leveraging our robust distribution network that has a reach of over 35 lakh outlets across India," said **Mr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, DS Group.**

"Pulse, with its delightful fusion of fruity and surprisingly tangy flavors, particularly the familiar raw mango with a zesty core, offered an unparalleled sensory experience to the consumer. This distinctly appealed to India's preference for tangy tastes which was a significant departure from the Western-format candies prevalent at the time. Pulse candy stands as a testament to the evolving Indian consumer who is more value-conscious today and DS Group truly leveraged this understanding by disrupting the market with its pricing strategy. At a time when 86% of the hard boiled candy market was at the 50-paise price point, Pulse boldly launched at INR 1. This wasn't just a higher price; it was a perceived higher value that resonated deeply with our palates and our pockets," **Mr Kumar** added.

"Pulse revolutionized the confectionery market by challenging the notion that candies were solely for children. It strategically tapped into an overlooked demographic, the adults, thereby significantly broadening the consumer base for impulse confectionery. Why should kids have all the fun? That was the premise. We leveraged our keen understanding of local palates and unmet consumer needs, allowing Pulse to redefine the segment and establish itself as a trendsetting brand with remarkable consumer loyalty. Even our packaging and design for Pulse was clutter breaking," he said.

DS Group revolutionized the Indian confectionery market in 2015 with Pulse. Leveraging its expertise in flavors and fragrances and deep understanding of Indian ethnic tastes, the organization reimagined the hard-boiled candy into a vibrant sensory experience with a surprising tangy core. Pulse was born out of a sharp consumer insight. Mango once captured 50% of the hard-boiled candy market, with raw mango accounting for 26% of this share, making it the dominant flavor profile within that segment. Leveraging the nostalgic element of the raw mango, DS Group transformed it into an innovative product.

Pulse's success stemmed from its raw mango flavor profile resonating with Indian palates and the signature tangy core delivering a layered sensation. Targeting all age groups, Pulse bridged traditional tastes with the contemporary format – it brought Indianness into a Western format, appealing to everyone. Driven initially by strong word-of-mouth and a loyal base, its differentiated positioning with **“Pran Jaaye Par Pulse Na Jaaye”** deeply resonated. Flavour extensions like Guava, Orange, Pineapple, and Litchi, along with format innovations like Shots in the original Kachcha Aam flavour, have helped keep the brand fresh and relevant in India's impulse confectionery segment.

The Pulse brand's trajectory from disruptive entrant to industry leader is also an IIM Ahmedabad marketing excellence case study, complementing its sustained benchmark-setting in product innovation and marketing proficiency. The IIMA case study offers a deep dive into the innovative marketing strategies and strategic decisions behind Pulse Candy's remarkable success. It comprehensively explores how the DS Group identified a market need, developed a unique product, and overcame challenges to achieve its phenomenal rise to prominence. Pulse candy pioneered India's hard-boiled sector and its unconventional marketing also gained recognition, notably the Pulse of the Sky campaign, which entered the Limca Book of Records for simultaneously flying 1,150 kites during

Uttarayan 2023 making it the only hard boiled candy to enter the Limca Book of Records. Pulse cultivated enduring brand engagement through initiatives like the award-winning **Pulse Ka Pandal**, Pulse Ganesh Mahotsav and received widespread industry acclaim for various campaigns securing accolades across platforms like the Abbys South Asia and Kyoorius Creative Awards.

In fact, Pulse Candy's initial success was significantly driven by strong word-of-mouth, organic posts by celebrities and influencers, several user generated content from a loyal consumer base and social media promotion.

Pulse expanded its product line by adding **Pulse Golmol – Imli Flavour**, a treat that takes one on a nostalgic journey. Inspired by the familiar tamarind (imli) flavour that has delighted generations again, Pulse Golmol Imli is a tangy soft chew. Made from high quality ingredient, 'Pulse Golmol Imli Goli' is infused with natural tamarind. It offers a distinctive combination of tangy and sweet flavours, delivering an irresistible burst of fun filled tanginess.

DS Groups culture of innovation and commitment to quality is evident across all segments of the confectionery business of DS Group. Besides Pulse candy, DS Group has also crafted compelling brand narratives and distinct consumer propositions for its key brands like Pass Pass, Rajnigandha Silver Pearls, Chingles, Oval, Piata, Cherio, Pulse Golmol and LuvIt. In the competitive Indian Ethnic Confectionery segment, DS Group stands out with its diverse offerings. Pass Pass offers a vibrant mix of flavours crafted for those who enjoy layered taste experiences, while Rajnigandha Silver Pearls continues to lead the market with its iconic, single-ingredient purity. With continuous innovation, DS Group has successfully transformed the Indian Ethnic Confectionery category into a branded and organized market, providing consumers with unique options to suit their preferences.

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