

Sweet success for Abbeyview

One of David Sands' newer shops won recognition for its confectionery offer at the Scottish Grocer Awards this year.

DAVID Sands' Abbeyview store in Dunfermline has just marked its first anniversary as part of the group. It's been a great year for the former Farmfoods outlet, in more ways than one. "Sales are going up every week – we've started from scratch and we're doing well over target," said store manager Bob Henderson.

And it took a very important title early in its life as part of the David Sands group – the Confectionery Retailer of the Year Award at the Scottish Grocer Awards in March.

It was a sweet triumph and the success continues. According to Bob, the recession hasn't had a negative impact on people's spend on confectionery – despite the recent increase in prices. They're keener than ever.

"People love their sweets," he said. We're also selling a lot of

bakery goods at the moment – it's comfort food. If anything they're buying more sweets."

Confectionery giant Mars was sponsor of the award and its products and professional advice play a major role in the store's confectionery range and in how it's sold.

In general Bob adheres to the planogram that comes from Mars head office, though there is scope for bringing in some local lines too. The Mars team come in to check it, he explained, and it changes about two or three times a year.

"New launches are fed in, and any lines that are slow to sell are taken out and new ones put in."

There are two secondary schools near the store, and a lot of schoolkids come in at lunchtime. Often, he says, they're looking for a bargain.

"They are quite promotion-

driven – they like their deals."

But adults are also attracted by good promotions. Promotional hods can make a big difference to sales, especially if they're sited near the checkout.

As well as the promotional deals, the most popular lines are the staples – Mars, Galaxy, Dairy Milk – and Thorntons.

"Thorntons lines are picking up really well now," he said. "The price of sweets has gone up, so Thorntons bars aren't a lot more expensive.

"You've got to have a range for everyone – it has to have 10 or 15p Swizzles sweets, the popular Mars, Galaxy and Dairy Milk lines, right through to your Thorntons bars. And it's got to look tidy. Stick to the basics and you're halfway there.

"We get four large deliveries a week with a whole case of sweets in each delivery, so it does take some time to put out," he said.

"There are always staff at the checkout, in sight of the confectionery fixture, and if there's a quiet moment they go round and tidy it up."

Bep Sandhu, Mars trade relations manager, said Bob had achieved success by rigorously applying important principles.

"Bob has really demonstrated many key display principles in his store," she said.

"He has an optimised range and his confectionery display is well merchandised and very eye catching, making it hard for customers to ignore – this has really driven his impulse purchases.

"Bob has also taken full advantage of alternative sites and multi-facings. Dump bins can boost sales by over 40% whilst multi-facing can create a 23% sales increase."

Fresh focus

As well as confectionery, fresh fruit and veg, chilled products and alcoholic drinks have also shown great sales. Bob's been amazed at the amount of fresh produce they sell.

"I can't believe how much produce goes through this store," he said.

"We're supplied by Raith Fruit, a local company based in



You've got to have a range for everyone, and it has to look tidy, says Bob Henderson, manager at the award-winning David Sands Abbeyview store.



Left: Fresh produce sales are surprisingly high at Abbeyview.



Right: Bob Henderson receives the Scottish Grocer Award for Confectionery Retailer of the Year from Bep Sandhu of Mars on the left and celebrity presenter Kirsty Gallaher on the right.

Kirkcaldy. They supply us with half cases, which allows us to keep the product fresh. We do a weekly promotion with them.”

On beer there’s strong competition from a Haddows nearby, but having chilled beer is an advantage. “Our wine’s chilled, our cider’s chilled and we have a cracking range, with good promotions at all times.

“It’s not just the cheap ciders either, it’s Bulmers, Gaymers and

a lot of the pear ciders that are selling well. Similarly with the wines – it’s not just the £2.99 or £3.99 bottles. People are spending £6, £7, two for £10 deals – they’re buying better quality, which is a surprise.”

Part of his surprise is down to the fact that the local area isn’t a very wealthy one. “It’s a council estate – it’s on the up though,” he said. “There’s a lot of employment in this area.”

The staff are all local. Most worked there before and have stayed on. The shop is seen as a community store, and £250 was recently donated to help buy equipment for local playgroups.

Services include an ATM, PayPoint and the Lottery. They’re well-used and lottery sales are going up.

All in all it’s a successful store which our confectionery champion feels has added

something to local life.

“We’ve come along here with a decent store, a good range, good prices, good promotions and it’s working.

“We’ve found that a lot of the local competition is now opening an hour longer. They’ve upped their game too, doing refits and bringing in promotions. It’s good for the locals. They’re getting a good range and good service too.”