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PepsiCo aims for a bigger Slice

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PepsiCo India is working on expanding the reach of its mango drink Slice by introducing it at newer channels of distribution. It also plans to do a lot more product sampling than before.

Speaking to *Business Line*, Mr Homi Battiwala, Director (Juice & Juice-Based Drinks), PepsiCo India, said the company would extend the drink's footprint by making it available in airports, cinema theatres and multiplexes and restaurants/chains such as Pizza Hut.

The drink, which was relaunched in 2008 with new formulation and packaging, will use outdoor media prominently this year to build equity. It will also advertise during the Indian Premier League matches, he said, adding that much more consumer engagement with the brand is planned this year.

A new ad campaign with brand ambassador Katrina Kaif will break tomorrow. This is an extension of the Aamsutra campaign that the brand adopted during the relaunch, and this year's version is supported by an aggressive marketing plan comprising



television, print, radio, outdoors and ground activation, Mr Battiwala said. The TV campaign has been produced by Nirvana Films. PepsiCo has had a French fashion photographer, Bruno Dayan, shoot the outdoors and print campaign primarily in black and white, with just the product featuring in colour.

MANGO MANIA

Mr Battiwala, who said Slice has grown by a good margin and doubled volumes in the last three years, would not reveal any statistics, though. However, he said the "consumer value" of the mango-based drinks market is Rs 2,500 crore, and that it has been growing at 25-35 per cent in the last few years. After cola and lime and lemon categories, mango is the most popular flavour in the country, he said, except in Chennai/Tamil

Nadu where orange is a strong contender.

According to him, the largest markets for the mango category are Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh; for PepsiCo, they are TN, Maharashtra and AP. TN accounts for 16 per cent of the all-India market for Slice.

In fact, Slice has just been launched in Mumbai, after being introduced in other cities in Maharashtra over the last couple of years. PepsiCo, which took over Duke's Mangola brand when it acquired the latter's manufacturing facility, has been integrating the two brands slowly, Mr Battiwala said, adding that one stock-keeping unit (SKU) of Mangola has been retained as it had a loyal franchise in the city.

Tropicana and Slice are the two big trademarks in PepsiCo's non-carbonated soft drinks category, he said, adding that there is huge headroom for growth there in the years to come. PepsiCo has invested "very strongly" in them, in terms of both marketing and capacity enhancement. Slice is available in five SKUs including glass and PET bottles and cartons, at prices ranging from Rs 10-Rs 55.