

The Grocer

Focus On: Bread & Baked goods by Vince Bamford (vince.bamford@thegrocer.co.uk)

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The Story

It's not quite brown bread, but the market's looking far from healthy. In the past year, Brits have spent a staggering £87.9m less on wrapped bread. The only saving grace is that volumes stayed more or less flat. Does this prove that the only way to maintain volumes in the commoditised bread market is to pile high and sell cheap? Or can value still be driven back into bread? What are bakers doing to this end? What can they learn from their counterparts overseas?

Key themes:

Pricing and promotions: Bread has become a crucial weapon in the supermarket price war. What impact has the return of the £1 loaf of bread had on the market? Are prices set to fall more over the coming year? How can brands resist the squeeze?

Innovation: Some of the biggest launches of the past year have failed to make a lasting impression on the market; others have simply cannibalised existing lines and contributed little to the overall health of the market. What have been the best and worst launches of the past year? Why? We will be profiling four of the latest and most interesting NPD from the UK in a separate panel.

The global picture: What lessons can British bakers learn from overseas markets? This feature will be looking at some of the best game changing pieces of innovation from other markets and explore their potential here in the UK. We will be profiling four of the most interesting NPD from overseas in a separate panel.

Health and functionality: This will be a key focus. The feature will explore how health concerns are driving the development of 'healthier' bread products such as low carb and high protein/fibre loaves. Gluten free will be another focus.

Sandwich alternatives: This part of the baked goods market continues to power on, with value and volumes sales up in double digits over the past year. This feature will explore which players are enjoying the lion's share of this growth... and who's being left behind.

Breakfast: With bakers continuing to target breakfast with an ever widening array of morning goods, this feature will explore which direction this part of the market is likely to take over the coming year, and which brands have been most successful in the past year.

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how new product development has shaped the category over the past year and what is in store for shoppers in 2014. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

Advertising and marketing: This feature will also investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest brands have evolved over the past year and how they will develop in the coming year to sustain growth or return brands to growth.

Box Outs

4 x UK innovations: Four new products or product ranges that have not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP

4 x global innovations: Four new products or product ranges that have not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP

Key questions the feature is likely to address:

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What's next for the category?