

The Grocer

Focus On: Adult Soft Drinks by Natalie Brown (natalie_brown@live.co.uk)

Publishing: 12 December
Advertising deadline: 26 November
Submissions deadline: 20 November

The Story

Adult soft drinks are booming. Value sales have surged and volumes are up, out-performing the wider soft drinks market, battered as concern over sugar content increases. Why? Have adult soft drinks been impacted by the sugar debate or have they got off unscathed? And to what extent is the market benefitting from the drive to moderate alcohol consumption and initiatives such as Stoptober and Dry January?

Key themes (this list is not exhaustive; new angles will be investigated as they arise):

Innovation: Key to this feature will be a discussion of the latest NPD on the market – particularly recent craft cola and premium soft drink products. The feature will explore the market trends that have inspired these innovations and weigh up which new launches are most likely to encourage new trends in the category. Four of the most interesting NPD will be profiled in a separate box.

Macro trends: This feature will explore in detail how consumer trends such as health and moderation of alcohol consumption are affecting this market. Another area of interest will be growing premiumisation, with particular reference being paid to the price inflation adult soft drinks have seen in the past year, contrary to the deflationary pattern in soft drinks and wider grocery

Retailers: Another key angle of this feature will be analysis of how different retailers are approaching this burgeoning category. How do different retailers' ranges (branded and own label), price and promotional strategies and merchandising differ? Who's championing the sector? Who's lagging behind?

Alcohol: The loose definition we use for this feature is soft drinks that are marketed as an alternative to alcohol. With initiatives such as Dry January and Stoptober gaining popularity and the government continuing to bang the drum for temperance, how much of an opportunity does all this present the sector?

Price/promotions: This feature will investigate the role price and promotions are playing in this market and explore what impact the extension of own label is likely to have on this pattern going forward.

Booze alternatives: The loose definition we use for this feature is soft drinks that are marketed as an alternative to alcohol. With initiatives such as Dry January and Stoptober gaining popularity and the government continuing to bang the drum for temperance, how much of an opportunity does all this present the sector? We will be exploring this in a separate box out.

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?