

The Grocer

Focus On: Winter Remedies by Carolyn Robertson (carolyn.robertson@thegrocer.co.uk)

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The Story

Following an unseasonably warm winter that saw temperatures hit highs of 16 degrees at Christmas, how has the market been affected by the weather and what, if anything, can brands and retailers do to lessen its impact on sales? Which brands, retailers and sub categories have been the biggest winners and losers in the past year? Why?

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

Retailers: Central to this feature will be an exploration of how different retailers have performed in this market over the past year, with particular attention being paid to how their ranging, promotions, merchandising and so on vary.

The weather: This feature will explore in detail what impact the weather has had on sales of winter remedies over the past year. Is the weather the key reason for the decline in sales of winter remedies? How do brands and retailers time promotions and ads, etc, around periods of severe weather?

Price and promotions: This feature will explore in detail the role price and promotions have played in the fortunes of the category over the past year, how strategies have evolved and how brands and retailers are looking to use price and promotions to return to growth over the coming year. It's noteworthy that average prices have increased overall. Why is this?

Innovation: Key to this feature will be a discussion of the latest NPD on the market. 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 recent/forthcoming launches will be profiled in a separate box.

Marketing and advertising: This feature will also explore how marketing has evolved over the past year, with particular attention being paid to above the line advertising, point of sale marketing and the 'as good as the major brand' claims of many of the smaller players in the market. How have things changed and what are brands' strategies for the coming year?

Functional food & drinks as remedies: This feature will look at how food and drink brands are looking to provide remedies for cold and flu sufferers by fortifying food and drink products. Examples include functional teas and smoothies. What else is on the cards? To what extent are consumers using food and drink to stave off colds?

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?