

# The Grocer

**Focus On: Cooking Sauces by Andrew Lusher ([me@andrewlusher.com](mailto:me@andrewlusher.com))**

**Publishing:** 4 February  
**Advertising deadline:** 20 January  
**Submissions deadline:** 17 January

## The Story

**Cooking sauces are cooling as Brits reined in spending on the category by £30.1m. And, unlike last year when traditional sauces cooked up some growth, all sub-categories are in value and volume decline. This was driven by brands, particularly Italian and traditional sauces. What's driving this? And how can they drive value over the coming year?**

### Key themes:

**Formats:** Pouches are a bright spot in the category, according to Kantar. How have these won favour over the past year? How are the brands performing? Are there any other formats (pastes, sachets, concentrated sauces) winning favour with consumers, particularly those in smaller households?

**Different cuisines:** This feature will explore in detail the factors that are leading to differing fortunes of different kinds of cuisines and investigate how brands and retailers are affecting sales. Particular attention will be paid to the impact meal kits and scratch cooking are having on different kinds of cuisines. What will be the next big cuisine?

**Discounters/retail mix:** How have the product ranges changed across the category's main retailers and what effect is this having on sales? The big four are all in decline, is this because consumers are swapping to the discounters which are still in impressive growth? What's gone wrong for The Co-op? And, what's behind Iceland's double digit growth in cooking sauces?

**Prices/promotions:** According to our research, average prices are pretty static but a closer look reveals the price per kilo of branded cooking sauces is up 3.4%, with even bigger increases in some sub-categories. What is behind this? Fewer promotions? NPD? Premiumisation? And is own label winning sales through lower prices?

**Health:** Last April Mars Foods recommended that some of its sauces only be used once a week due to health reasons. What impact has this had on its performance? How are brands seeking to improve the health of their ready-made sauces?

**Brands v own label:** Our research suggests that branded cooking sauces' loss has been own label's gain. To what extent is this down to the growth in the more own label reliant discounters? Which other retailers are driving this? How have own label ranges been developed over the past year and what's in store over the coming year?

**Innovation:** This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how successful the raft of innovation last year has been in driving growth and value back into the category. What innovation will we be seeing in 2015? The article will feature a panel profiling four of the most interesting upcoming/recent cooking sauce launches.

**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?