

The Grocer

Focus On: Lunchbox by Amy North (amy.north@thegrocer.co.uk)

Publishing: 1 July
Advertising deadline: 9 June
Submissions deadline: 6 June

The Story

Brits have packed their own lunches on an extra 82 million occasions in the past 18 months. That's a rise of 4.4%. What's more Brits are spending more time preparing their packed lunches. What's going on? What macro trends (economic, social and so on) are driving this renaissance in packed lunches? What are people filling their lunchboxes with? And how are brands and retailers looking to cash in?

Key themes:

Demographics: Which are the most important demographics for the lunchbox market now and how are manufacturers and retailers looking to attract them? This feature will also explore what impact of the introduction of free school meals for kids aged five to nine in 2014 had on this market and how brands and retailers approach to the market has changed since.

Packed lunch components: This feature will explore in detail the choices consumers are making when it comes to packing their lunches and how these choices are changing. We will be looking at all the staple packed lunch components – fruit; sandwiches; crisps; etc – to newer, more unusual products that are trying to win greater share of the Great British lunchbox. How are trends such as health affecting this?

Convenience retail and meal deals: This feature will explore in detail the impact of convenience retailers and multiples offering £3 lunch deals and alike is having on Britain's willingness to pack a lunchbox of a morning.

Price & promotions: This will be paid particularly close attention in this feature. How important are deals for player looking to win share of our packed lunches? How vital is it for brands to hit certain price points in the current climate? How is the use of meal deals by retailers affecting whether or not we will pack our own lunch?

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 2017. We will be profiling 12 of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel, featuring everyone from cheese to chocolate brands, crisps, nuts and snacks to savoury pastries, drinks, adult snacks, kids snacks and so on.

Formats: This feature will explore in detail how much of an opportunity there is for brands looking to get inside our lunchboxes to do so by innovating in terms of formats. Who's leading the way? Are there any good example of innovative formats from abroad?

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.

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's next for the category?