

The Grocer

Focus On: Household and Paper products by Natalie Brown (natalie_brown@live.co.uk)

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The Story

Will Britain become the dirty man of Europe once more? Brits appear to be turning their backs on cleaning, as volume sales of household items have taken a tumble. So what has prompted the fall in volumes? Which items are consumers scrimping on? And what is behind the price rises – to what extent can we blame Brexit-related inflation?

Key themes:

Falling volumes: Volumes are falling across almost every sub-category. To what extent is this down to supermarkets reining in multibuys? Are people just buying bigger packs? Or are they scrimping on cleaning?

Price rises: Prices are also up almost across the board. Why is this? Is it a move towards bigger packs? Or is an unfavourable post-Brexit exchange rate pushing up raw material costs?

Paper products: Paper products have largely bucked the trends in the category, as prices have remained static and volumes have increased. But how long can paper products resist caving into the impact of inflation?

Cheaper alternatives: As branded prices carry on an upwards trajectory, more shoppers are buying into own label. Plus, more people are looking outside the big four for bargains with value sales at bargain stores are up 13%.

Washing up products: Volumes are down so why is this? To what extent are we shunning liquids in favour of dishwasher products?

Laundry: Laundry products are suffering with machine wash down in value and volume. Are we simply buying bigger value packs? And can NPD inject value back the category?

Air fresheners: Volumes are down but value is up. Are air fresheners becoming more of a premium treat than an everyday item?

The next big thing? What do the category's experts think will be the next big thing in household and paper? Can anything inject value back into the category and get consumers trading back up again?

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?