

The Grocer

Focus On: Pasta & Pasta Sauces, publishing 3rd November

Online Listicle to go live on 2nd November

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The Story

You could be forgiven for thinking Brits were done with pasta. On the high street, it's troubling times for staple Italian eateries such as Strada and Jamie's Italian. Last year saw a decline in pasta sales at the grocers, too. But there is good news on the horizon. Pasta is back in marginal growth this year and, crucially, it's attracting new shoppers. A new wave of Italian eateries are also gaining ground. So who is this fresh wave of consumers? What are they looking for? And who stands to win from these extra sales?

Online Listicle: From red lentil penne to green pea fusilli, the latest pasta alternatives hitting the market

Key themes:

Out of home: A new wave of Italian restaurants are popping up all over the country, such as London's Padella and Bancone, Bristol's Pasta Loco and Newcastle's Zucchini Pasta Bar. These all promise simple freshly made pasta, premium ingredients and a bit of flair. To what extent is this approach being mirrored in shopping habits?

New shoppers: Who are the new entrants to the pasta category? What are they looking for?

Fresh pasta: Prices are up hugely in both fresh filled and fresh cut pasta, which has led to a drop in volume. To what extent is this down to fewer promotions? Is this alienating shoppers who used to get a pasta meal deal for tonight? How can fresh pasta win back sales?

Dry pasta: By contrast, prices have decreased in dry pasta, which has prompted an increase in volume. Own label is particularly winning in this area as shoppers look for the cheapest option. To what extent is dry pasta being seen as more of a commodity, whereas fresh is a treat?

Pasta sauces: Sauces sales are continuing to struggle, but there are some exceptions. M&S, for example, has grown sales by 24.5%. Is this because shoppers will only part with their cash if they perceive the sauce as 'something special'? What role do authenticity and provenance play?

Retailers: Who is winning in pasta and why?

Innovations: We identify four new products that ideally have not appeared in The Grocer before including launch date and RSP, and image

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 has merchandising changed in the market?