

The Grocer

Focus On: Soft drinks by Rob Brown (rob_j_a_brown@hotmail.com)

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The Story

Soft drinks are a robust bunch. Even the sugar tax hasn't managed to dent the category, which has responded with fast-growing sugar-free flavours. But now they are facing a very different challenge: the coronavirus crisis. Although the lockdown won't stop consumers buying soft drinks – in retail, at least – it does throw up its own set of questions. As pubs and restaurants close, retail is now the priority for the soft drinks industry. So how is it shifting its emphasis towards grocery? What are brands doing to encourage sales in this difficult time? And how is the global crisis affecting consumption habits?

KEY THEMES

Retail vs foodservice: To what extent are brands diverting production from foodservice to retail? What does this mean for their overall sales, margins and logistics?

Pricing and promotions: How are soft drinks using pricing to tempt consumers, if at all? Are they offering temporary price reductions? And are multibuys out in the current climate?

Rationalisation: The retailers are stripping back their ranging to concentrate on best-sellers. How is this affecting the soft drinks industry? Are their smaller variants taking a hit? What does this mean for spin-offs?

Sugar-free: Until now, the soft drinks levy has successfully pushed consumers towards sugar-free options. Is that behaviour continuing in the coronavirus crisis?

Availability: To what extent have soft drinks suffered availability issues during the coronavirus crisis? Is there any stockpiling going on, or has this sector largely been immune?

Iced coffee: How are iced coffee sales faring as consumers are left unable to go out to coffee shops for their caffeine fix?

Smaller formats: Until now, manufacturers have been boosting their profits with smaller 'treat' formats. To what extent is this still working in the coronavirus crisis? Are shoppers switching to larger formats as they opt for big nights in?

Shopper Intelligence data: Using commentary from Insight Traction, we explain how consumers are navigating the soft drinks aisles

Kantar data: Using Kantar commentary, we explain the reasons behind the rise and fall of the sub-categories.

Nielsen data: Using Nielsen commentary, we explain the reasons behind the rise and fall of the top 10 brands.

Innovations: We identify eight new products that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before including launch date and RSP, and a picture of each.