

The Grocer

Focus On: Halloween by Rob Brown

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What do the crystal balls of the supermarkets and their suppliers tell us about the uncertain future of Halloween 2021? Last year's was a damp squib thanks to a certain killer virus. Despite the fact the witching festival fell on a Saturday (usually a dead cert for bumper sales), sales of Halloween food, drink and other ghastly goods were down 3.2% on sales achieved for the last Saturday Halloween, back in 2015. What does this tell us about how this year's event, which falls on a Sunday, will shape up? How can supermarkets, online retailers and their suppliers make the most of the event?

Murky crystal ball: It's impossible to tell if all restrictions will be lifted on 19 July or not. So, understandably, the crystal ball is looking decidedly murky when it comes to Halloween 2021. So how are retailers and their suppliers planning for the event? Has space allocation and product development been put on hold in the hope that things will become clearer?

The death of trick or treating? This feature will explore in detail what impact the pandemic had on traditional Halloween activities such as trick or treating, home decorations and so on. What are confectioners doing to prepare for this year's Halloween? And what about fancy dress?

Parties: Unsurprisingly (and reassuringly, given the restrictions we were living under at the time), there was a marked decline in Halloween parties and get-togethers last year. So how are booze brands, home decorations and fancy dress manufacturers and producers of any other products that tend to see a spike in sales at Halloween preparing for this year's festivities?

Pumpkins: Thirty nine per cent of households planned to carve a pumpkin for Halloween in 2020. And pumpkins delivered an extra £4.9 million in incremental sales for retailers, many of which slashed prices to £1 to drive sales. Were they using pumpkins as a loss leader? Who are the biggest pumpkin suppliers in the country? And are they anticipating a bigger year this year?

Merchandising and retail channels: This feature will pay close attention to how retailers have adapted their merchandising of Halloween goods in response to the pandemic and how they will be allocating space this year. Another key focus will be changes in how consumers are shopping for Halloween products and the channels that are seeing most growth/loss.

Innovation: A key focus of this feature will be the latest trends in terms of product innovation. We will be profiling interesting upcoming launches in a separate boxout – we require details about the product, its launch date, rsp and retail listings and high resolution (no less than 300dpi/1mb) product images.

What's hot for this year's witching season? The good the bad and the ugly in terms of Halloween fancy dress for 2021. We're looking for four examples of new and interesting fancy dress costumes. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.