

The Grocer

Focus On Soft Drinks

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Feature one: Is innovation delivering for fizzy drinks?

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Several reports in the past year have suggested that cola and other fizzy drinks are losing their relevance with younger drinkers. Is this correct? And if so, why? How successful have recent weird and wonderful launches – everything from chocolate biscuit-flavoured and electric blue colas to tutti-frutti fruit carbonates and Caribbean Crush energy drinks – been in terms of both sales and reconnecting fizzy drinks’ younger generation? What are brands doing in terms of marketing to attract younger drinkers and keep them coming back?

Limited editions: Brands have been throwing all sorts of limited-edition flavours at the wall to see what sticks. How successful have they been in terms of sales and reengaging younger people with carbonated soft drinks? How great is the risk that such products will cannibalise sales of existing products? What’s been most successful? What’s flopped?

Demographics: This feature will play close attention to how the demographic make-up of traditional fizzy drinks consumers has changed in recent years and why. To what extent have fizzy drinks lost out to products like energy and sports drinks, fruit juice or even water in younger people’s affections?

Health: This feature will also explore the extent to which health concerns are affecting sales of carbonated soft drinks. With the new generation having grown up with reusable water bottles, to what extent are younger people drinking water instead of fizzy drinks? How do they view sugar and artificial sweeteners? What about functional health benefits?

Challengers: We will also be exploring the opportunities that exist for challenger brands to shake up the fizzy drinks category. Which challengers have been successful in recent years in getting a foothold in the market? Have any fallen by the wayside? What challenges do they face?

Cacao soda: What’s so great about cacao? Can it blow up in the UK? Has it done so anywhere else?

Innovation: This feature will pay close attention to the latest trends in soft drinks and how these are playing out in terms of product innovation. We will profile eight of the most interesting latest launches, ideally ones that have not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.

Feature two: The rise of gut health soft drinks

Rob Brown (rob_j_a_brown@hotmail.com)

Gut health orientated soft drinks are going places. Just look at some brands planned acquisitions, investment, or any number of the recent launches from challengers for proof. So how big can gut health soft drinks get? Do their health claims stand up to scrutiny? Are we likely to see more mergers and acquisitions in this area? Who's buying? And who's for sale?

Health claims: Can soft drinks really boost gut health? What is the science behind the claims brands are making around gut health? And what claims are brands allowed to make under legislation? What's the difference between probiotics and prebiotics?

Sales: This feature will weigh up the sales performances of kombucha and other soft drinks sold on gut health claims. Which retailers have got behind this trend? How much potential is there for soft drinks sold on gut health claims in the UK? How big have they got in other markets?

Innovation: This feature will pay close attention to the latest trends in soft drinks and how these are playing out in terms of product innovation. We will profile eight of the most interesting latest launches ideally ones that have not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.