

The Grocer

Focus On: Pizza by Emma Sturgess (emma-sturgess@hotmail.co.uk)

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The Story

Pizza sales have topped £900m as Brits' appetite for the Neapolitan speciality shows no sign of abating. What's more, with take home sales and volumes up, the sector doesn't seem to have been impacted by the deflation gripping the rest of grocery. Why? Which retailers, brands and manufacturers are cashing in? And who's being left behind?

Key themes:

Retailers: Central to this feature will be analysis of how different retailers are approaching pizza, with particular attention being paid to how retailers are driving value into the category through their premium tier own label lines and fresh pizza counters. We will be looking to identify retailers' most successful new launches through discussions with retailers and manufacturers.

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how branded and own label new product development has shaped the category over the past year and what is in store for shoppers in 2015. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

Frozen v chilled: In volume terms, frozen pizza is outgrowing chilled. Why? How have factors such as NPD, advertising and the fact you can pick up three frozen pizzas at the discounters for the price of a single chilled pizza in the mults helped? Is the quality of frozen now so high that you don't need to spend more on chilled? Why is value outgrowing volume in chilled?

Promotions: This feature will explore how the promotional strategies of retailers and brands have changed over the past year, particularly in light of the rise in own label. Attention will be paid to the promotional strategies of retailers and how this has affected average prices over the past year. We will also be running a separate box focusing on research on featured space deals.

Advertising and marketing: This feature will also investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest brands have evolved over the past year and how they will develop in the coming year to sustain growth or return brands to growth.

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?