

The Grocer

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

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In April the National Convenience Show will take place over three days at NEC Birmingham. The show will be packed with the biggest and most innovative fmcg suppliers and service providers for c-store operators. So, with independent convenience retailers facing unprecedented competition from multiple retailers and their continuing advance into convenience, what does the show have in store for retailers who are looking to up productivity and provide new services?

Key themes:

New services: It's never been more important for independent convenience retailers to create a genuine USP. This feature will explore in detail how NCS exhibitors will be looking to help c-store retailers establish that point of difference. We will be looking at everything from electronic bill payment and money transfer services through to food to go and ATMs.

Productivity: It's not just in front of the counter where retailers need to up their game; they need to become more efficient, and ultimately profitable, in the back room too. This feature will explore in detail how NCS exhibitors will be looking to help c-store retailers become more efficient. We will be looking at everything from stock taking and cashing in through to shelving systems and EPOS.

Hot new trends: Of course any discussion of NCS wouldn't be complete without a rundown of the hottest new trends that will be shaping convenience retail over the coming months and years. This feature will explore which hot new consumer trends will be defining this year's show. If it's new and innovative we want to hear about it!

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We'll be exploring how NPD and new services will be shaping the sector in 2016. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches that are due to be unveiled at this year's NCS, including launch date, image and RSP.

The low down: The vital things to know about this year's exhibition. We want to know where, when and what the show is, of course, but we also want to hear how the event has evolved since last year.

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?