

The Grocer

Focus On: healthcare & supplements by Lucy McDonald (lucymmcdonald@gmail.com)

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The Story:

Sales of healthcare supplements are still in rude health. Brits have forked out an extra £8.9m (2%) on them in the past year, with kids and adult multivitamins and vitamin D performing particularly well; overall, an extra million packs have been shifted. What's driving this growth? How long will it continue? And what will drive future growth?

Key themes:

Vitamins: This feature will explore the factors – including NPD, price, promotions, advertising and wider macro consumer trends – that have led to the growth in vitamin & minerals. How are players looking to sustain growth? Which parts of this market are in growth and which are in decline? What's driving this?

Sports specific products: This is the age of the MAMIL and MAWIL (middle-aged men/women in lycra). More and more Brits are taking up sports and entering events such as marathons, triathlons and obstacle runs – so how is the healthcare category stepping up to cater for these active types? This feature will include analysis from brands and retailers on the scale of the opportunity.

The next big thing? With products such as krill oil, raspberry ketones, green coffee extract, etc now in the mainstream, what will be the next big thing? What are TV personalities such as Oprah and Dr Oz and bloggers (all of which have a big influence on this market) raving about? And what do these products actually do?

Age/condition specific supplements: Over the past few years we have seen a glut of launches for specific consumer groups (men, women, pregnant women, sports people, etc). This feature will explore the factors that are leading to this growth.

Diet pills: This feature will explore the latest goings on in the diet pill market – often subject to peaks and troughs driven by the launch of new products and negative publicity regarding and at times unfortunate (and embarrassing) side effects.

Advertising and marketing: This feature will investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest brands have evolved and how they will develop in the coming year.

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how new product development has shaped the category over the past year and what is in store for shoppers in 2017. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

Promotions: Promotions, particularly multibuy deals, are of huge importance to this market. This feature will explore how the promotional strategies of retailers and brands have changed over the past year. Attention will be paid to the promotional strategies of retailers and how this has affected average prices, and of course sales and buying patterns, over the past 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?