

The Grocer

Focus On: Halloween by Lucy McDonald (lucymmcdonald@gmail.com)

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The Story

Britain's supermarkets are going to war over the witching season, as Halloween's importance as a sales opportunity continues to rise. So who's winning and losing in the fight for dominance of Halloween? How are they merchandising their seasonal goods and this time of year? What kinds of products are selling best at Halloween? Which brands and suppliers are making the most of the opportunity?

Key themes:

The retail mix: This feature will pay close attention to how different retailers are looking to make the most of Halloween. The strategies of the grocery multiples (many of whom are converting whole aisles to Halloween 'stores within stores'), discounters and pound stores will be investigated in terms of merchandising, product ranges, pricing and so on.

Fancy dress: Fancy dress is one of the biggest sectors at Halloween. How has the sector fared in recent years following incidences of costumes igniting and causing catastrophic burns to kids (one such incidence involved Claudia Winkleman's daughter in 2014)? What has the industry done to make costumes safer?

Confectionery: Halloween is big business for confectioners. How did sales perform last Halloween and which brands, retailers and trends are driving growth? How important is trick or treating here? And what new products can we expect to see this Halloween?

Squashes and pumpkins: How are pumpkins and squashes performing? Are they being used for carving or are they actually being eaten? How are retailers merchandising them?

Adults: Increasingly adults are being bitten by the Halloween bug. This feature will explore how retailers and brands are looking to capitalise on this trend with new products, marketing campaigns and in store activity.

Toys: This feature will explore how important toys have become for supermarkets that want to make the most of Halloween and investigate what manufacturers and retailers are doing to maximise the opportunities seasonal toys offer.

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 eight of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

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's next for the category?