

The Grocer

Focus On: Food On the Go by James Halliwell (jameshalliwell@gmail.com)

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The Story

Every lunchtime, the retail sector does battle over time pressed Brits' hungry tumms. And it's a battle worth fighting: the food & drink to go market is booming, with sales up 3.2% to £24,389m. So which retailers are winning? What can the retailers that are lagging behind do differently? What trends – health, hot, cold, international and so on – are influencing the sector? And what's the next big thing?

Key themes:

Health and lifestyle: This will be a central theme of this feature. We will be speaking to the brands behind fruit & nut and wholefood snacking innovations, sandwich players about the growth in bread alternatives, sushi and salad suppliers and more.

Exotic tastes: This feature will also pay close attention to how Brits' increasingly adventurous tastes are informing on-the-go innovation, from toast-able curry-filled naan breads and burritos through to sushi, which is in huge growth. What will be the next thing in terms of more exotic on the go products?

Innovation: Key to this feature will be a discussion of the latest NPD from the category's brands and own label players, large and small. The feature will explore the market trends that have inspired these innovations and weigh up which new launches are most likely to encourage new trends in the market. We will profile eight of the most interesting new launches in a separate innovation panel including launch date, RSP and image of each.

Retailers: Central to this feature will be analysis of how different retailers are looking to corner the on-the-go market, through everything from meal deals and impulse fixtures to hot food to go and coffee facilities. Which retailers are leading the field and who's being left behind?

Price: According to our data, average prices in food on the go have risen significantly in the past year. What has driven this – straightforward inflation? Premiumisation? Both? And what's likely to happen to prices in the coming year given all the current economic uncertainty?

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?