

The Grocer

Focus On Adult Soft Drinks

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More people than ever before (one in three at last count) are teetotal or trying to moderate how much alcohol they drink. But just because people are off the sauce, that doesn't mean they're happy to compromise on flavour, style or sophistication. Just look at the booming sales of low and no alcohol alternatives. But what about unashamedly soft drinks for adults that don't try to mimic alcoholic products? How are sales holding up? And what will be the next big thing in this sector?

Kombucha: Naturally low in sugar fermented tea product kombucha has long been touted as ripe for growth in the UK, with pioneering brands pointing to the success of 'booch' in markets such as the US and Australia. How are sales performing here? Are we due our own booch boom?

CBD: Drinks containing cannabidiol have been gaining chiller space in recent years. How are they performing at the tills? And how will they be impacted by FSA plans to cut the acceptable daily intake of CBD from 70mg to 10mg?

Adaptogens and other health claims: Many adult soft drinks claim to offer drinkers added functional health benefits by virtue of so-called 'adaptogens' (ingredients such as chaga and lion's mane mushrooms claimed to aid wellbeing) and, in the case of kombucha, live bacteria. Do these claims hold weight for consumers? And do they stack up legally?

Flavour profiles: This feature will also explore how the flavour profiles of adult soft drinks are evolving as people continue to reduce their alcohol intake. To what extent are bitter, sour or spicy flavours gaining ground and how are brands looking to cash in on demand for more challenging flavour profiles?

Packaging formats: It's noteworthy that sales of Coca-Cola packaged in glass bottles, a packaging format that has long been used to connote sophistication and premium cues, are in strong growth. To what extent are adult soft drinks brands using different packaging formats to communicate their values?

Consumption occasions: We will also explore how, where, when and why people are consuming adult soft drinks and how this is changing as the category evolves. What are brands and retailers doing to encourage the consumption of adult soft drinks at different occasions?

Innovations (400 words): We will profile eight new products or ranges that, ideally, have not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.