

The Grocer

Focus On Food to Go

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Publishing: 2 December 2023
Advertising deadline: 16 November 2023
Submissions deadline: 13 November 2023

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Few markets have had bumpier rides than food to go lately: sales withered in lockdown, bounced back post-pandemic and the sector's since seen significant downtrading as soaring costs prompt people to draw in their belts. The biggest beneficiaries of all this tumult have been convenience, discount and fast-food channels [IGD]. In the past year, foodservice operators hit by falling trade to commuters have been playing c-stores at their own game. Pret launched a £3 meal deal and everyone from KFC to Wasabi have launched loyalty schemes. So how will supermarket, convenience and discounter food-to-go offerings evolve in the coming year? And what will foodservice operators be doing to win back share?

Meal deal product mix and pricing: This feature will pay close attention to how the pricing and product mix of supermarket meal deals is evolving in light of factors such as greater numbers of people working from home, more affluent shoppers trading down from foodservice, etc. What are multiple convenience retailers, discounters and foodservice players doing to win share?

Outlet expansion: We will also be exploring how convenience retailers, coffee shop chains and fast-food operators are expanding their estates in response to changes in where and when people are demanding food to go since the pandemic. For example, are operators investing more in suburban, neighbourhood, travel retail, forecourts, drive-thru, etc? Why?

Rapid delivery: Another area of interest will be the rise of rapid delivery services and how retailers and foodservice operators are using third party operators like Deliveroo and Uber Eats, as well as their own apps, to cater for people working from home who want to grab a quick bite.

Cost pressures: We will also be asking retailers, suppliers and market analysts about whether there's any let-up in sight in terms of the huge cost pressures they have faced over the past year or so. What have been the biggest cost pressures and how have they sought to mitigate them?

Consumer needs: Another theme will be how consumer needs are changing at present. Have we seen increased demand for more indulgent treats, healthier products, more convenient items that you can munch on the hoof or products that can be heated and consumed at a more leisurely pace at home? How are brands and retailers responding to these changes?

Innovations: 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.