

The Grocer

Focus On Sugar Confectionery by Adam Witherington
(adam@ahwcommunications.com)

Publishing: 5 July 2025
Advertising deadline: 20 June 2025
Submissions deadline: 18 June 2025

Sugar confectionery brands have been having their last hurrah ahead of the crackdown on junk food advertising and promotions which was due to come into force in October (but is now postponed until January after legal challenges by food companies). Sales have surged by 5.4% to just shy of £2bn and volumes are up by 3.7%, after big sweets brands splurged on ads, in-store promotions and innovation ahead of the HFSS rules imposition. Which brands have grown most? How? Who's missed out? Why? What impact will the HFSS restrictions on the market when they do come in force? And how will brands be capitalising on the latest suspension of the new rules?

HFSS: Central to this feature will be an exploration of the new HFSS rules that come into force in January and the impact they are likely to have on the sugar confectionery market. Have brands been rushing to spend on ads ahead of the new rules? Is anyone exempt from them? How effective are the new rules likely to be in reducing obesity? Are sweets brands challenging their legality? How?

New formats: Freeze-dried sweets are hot stuff right now with brands looking to tap the TikTok trend. What's all the fuss about? How big can they get? And what about other formats – like energy sweets and gum, for example?

Health, indulgence and treat culture: This feature will explore the extent to which 'healthier' sugar-free sweets have made inroads into the sugar confectionery category and the factors at play here. Do people care about eating healthily when it comes to sweets, or do they just want to treat themselves?

Brands v own-label: This feature will explore how the balance between brands and own-label has changed over the past year. Which retailers have been pushing own label products the most in the past year and how are brands fighting back? How do they compare on price, product quality and the like?

Marketing: We will also be looking at how the big brands are using their marketing budgets to convince shoppers to continue putting them in their baskets. How reliant are they on celebrity endorsements, primetime TV ads and digital? And how can challengers with shallower pockets cut through the noise?

Retail share: This feature will explore how different retailers are managing the category in terms of ranging, promotions and balancing brands and own label product assortments. How are brands working with retailers to create excitement in the fixture? Which retailers are in strongest growth and why?

Innovation: The past year has seen plenty of innovation in sugar confectionery. This feature will explore the latest trends and how this is playing out in terms of product innovation. We will profile four of the most interesting latest launches in a separate innovation panel.

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