

The Grocer

Focus On Low & No Alcohol

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The UK's biggest booze brands are going off the sauce. For many of those in our annual ranking of grocery's 100 bestselling brands, it's zero-alcohol variants that are driving most or all growth. This follows huge investment in product development, marketing and, in some cases, formulation improvements resulting in the finished product more closely resembling the real thing. So, with big booze putting more weight behind booze-free options, how can stand-alone low and no alcohol brands compete? How much consumer recognition do standalone brands have compared to the giants of the category? How do they compare in terms of sales and growth? And how can they compete with the big brands?

Marketing: We will explore the extent to which the big booze brands are leveraging long-established and hard-won consumer loyalty to drive growth in the zero-alcohol variants, as well as the extent to which core products are benefitting from a 'halo effect' from the marketing of zero-alcohol lines. How are the big brands marketing low and no? How can standalone low and no brands compete with the huge budgets of the giants?

Routes to market: The big booze companies have well-established relationships with retailers and on-trade operators (of course, some even have sizeable pub estates). To what extent are they leveraging these routes to market to win share of the burgeoning low and no category? What routes are standalone brands taking to get their products in consumers' hands? Which channels – i.e. retail, DTC, on-trade, etc – are most important and how is that changing?

Price versus product quality: The quality of low and no alcohol products has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years. That's a good thing, considering how much some brands are asking for their products (some zero alcohol spirits cost more than the real thing). What technical advances have fuelled the improvements in product quality? Why are some zero alcohol products (which are exempt from alcohol duty) so expensive? And are shoppers prepared to pay?

Innovation: The past year has seen plenty of innovation in low and no booze. This feature will explore the latest trends and how this is playing out in terms of product innovation. We will profile four 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.