

The Grocer

Focus On: Hot Desserts by Matt Chittock (matt.chittocknew@googlemail.com)

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The Story

Hot desserts and puddings are showing signs of recovery. One year ago sales were down 7% – now they are up 0.7% (although volumes continue to fall) as base prices are hiked up across the category. So, what's behind the price increases? And, can these be sustained in the long term? And, why are desserts such as rice and sponge puddings achieving such impressive growth when the likes of pies, tarts & flans are plummeting?

Key themes (this list is not exhaustive; new angles will be investigated as they arise):

Brand vs own label: Our research shows that own label is driving the growth as branded offerings lose both value and volume sales. So, why are own label sales rising? This feature will explore in detail retailers' strategies in the category, looking at NPD, price and promotions. It will also investigate which brands are suffering the most and which are bucking this trend.

Macro trends: This feature will explore the trends affecting the hot desserts market. This should include how the health debate is affecting the category as well as the economic outlook. As the economy recovers, are consumers turning away from the category?

The discounters: The discounters have seen great growth in hot desserts over the past year. So, how have they achieved this? And, how are they looking to increase their share? How do their product and price ranges compare with those of the mainstream multiples? Which brands are enjoying the most growth in the discounters?

Price/promotions: This feature will investigate the role price and promotions are playing in this market. Base prices are increasing. What is behind increases? Which retailers have seen significant increases? Why?

Innovation: Key to this feature will be a discussion of the latest NPD on the market. 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 category.

Advertising: Who's spending big on advertising in hot desserts and puddings? What are they spending it on? And, most importantly, has their investment paid off?

4 x innovations: We profile four new products or product ranges- that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP.

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?
- We profile four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP.