

RETAIL NEWSAGENT

NATURAL PROFITS

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Indies' key role in Tesco retreat



High street closures and scrapped openings a victory for local shops, says symbol group boss. Tesco and Morrisons shut stores after rapid expansion backfires in face of increasing independent competition. **Page 5 >>**



SYMBOL GROUPS

Best-one's tough line on new recruits

Symbol grows by 149 stores but axes its non-compliant members.

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NEWSTRIDE

Fair deal on HND re-run payments

Industry agrees to up compensation rates after talks.

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SOFT DRINKS

Lucozade exclusive

Grafrutti will only be sold in local shops.

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Leading the way Lambs Larder owner Peter Lamb shows the ins and outs of his Sinclair Collis tobacco dispensing machine, which he says has helped him improve cash flow in his store. The East Sussex retailer is one of thousands of independents introducing gantry solutions in advance of the tobacco display ban coming into effect in April. **Page 4 >>**

CHARLIE HEBDO

Survivors' issue in demand

Retailers take advance orders for controversial French title as copies head for UK.

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Scams to look out for in 2015 and how to beat the fraudsters.

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LEADER



**Independents
must respond by
focusing on what
they are already
good at**



CHRIS ROLFE
Associate editor
@ChrisRolfeRN

What a fortnight it's been for the supermarkets. With Christmas trading results season in full swing, Morrisons' Dalton Philips is soon to be jobless, Tesco is readying itself to shed 43 stores and has shelved plans for 49 new ones while Marks & Spencer is wondering how to recover from a "disastrous" Christmas.

This is just a snapshot, but the questions it raises for RN readers are what action the results will prompt from the supermarkets and how independent retailers should react.

Analysts say we can expect Tesco, for example, to refocus on grocery and improve its offering and customer service. They moot increased staff levels and greater autonomy for store managers as two avenues to explore. And expect Asda's recent price cuts to set the course for the grocery market this year, Verdict Retail's Andy Stevens told us.

Whether you are capitalising on a closure, protecting your business as a multiple neighbour plans its comeback or simply thinking about the coming year, the key is create a plan to keep your store ahead of the game.

Both Mr Stevens and Bestway's symbol director James Hall told RN that independents must respond by focusing on what they are already good at: convenience, longer opening hours and community involvement. Make sure that yours is a well-run store that meets its customers' needs. Take a leaf out of Tesco's book when it comes to fresh and chilled offerings, highly visible deals and cross-category promotions. And avoid a price war at all costs.

Mr Hall says Tesco's store closures should be considered a victory by retailers who have upped their game, engaged with communities and worked to keep customers loyal. How can you do that this year?

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NEVER TRY TO BEAT THESE GUYS ON PRICE UNLESS YOU WANT TO LOSE A LOT OF MONEY

– ANALYST ANDY STEVENS ON HOW TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE SUPERMARKETS THIS YEAR. Page 26 >>

NEWS



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Listen to retailers, says MP

An MP has said councils must consider the wishes of residents and traders who oppose supermarket openings.

Glenda Jackson said she was concerned about plans by Tesco to open a store in Belsize Park, north London, in her Hampstead and Kilburn constituency, which went against the wishes of locals.

Award-winning retailer Andrew Thornton, who owns Thornton's Budgens, is spearheading a campaign against the Express store.

He has raised concerns that new planning rules mean it will not be necessary to obtain permission for change of use and only an alcohol licence will be required.

Ms Jackson said: "Councils have got to consider the views of local residents who clearly don't want this store to open."

Min pricing is a good call

Calls by leading doctors to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol have been welcomed by the NFRN.

Twenty senior health professionals have written to The Telegraph saying that a 50p minimum unit price would help tackle the impact of excessive alcohol consumption, while easing the pressure on hospitals, police and the criminal justice system.

NFRN chief executive Paul Baxter said: "We have long believed that minimum pricing would reduce harmful drinking as well as protecting independent retailers who, sadly, are all too often the victims of alcohol fuelled crime.

"We are pleased that leading health professionals have joined calls for a minimum unit price and hope that this will result in some positive action."



Fuel for thought An independent petrol station owner had to call for an emergency fuel delivery after slashing 6p off the price of his petrol. On Sunday afternoon, Dr Velautham Sarveswaran's Harvest Energy station in Birmingham became the first to sell fuel for less than £1 a litre since 2009. Motorists drove from miles away to fill up at the station, leading to four of his eight fuel pumps running dry. The retailer said he was fed up with supermarkets "cheating" customers with rip-off prices. "I will still be making money by cutting prices and my customers wanted to see me break the £1 barrier. My customers are happy," he said.

'No worries' say indies already dark

Scores of independents have already 'gone dark' on their tobacco gantries ahead of the forthcoming display ban, claiming they do not expect to see a drop in sales as a result.

Andover retailer Mayur Patel has taken advantage of the NFRN's deal with gantry specialists Expotutto, installing one of the company's Svertab overhead tobacco units just before Christmas.

Mr Patel used the extra space behind the counter to stock more alcohol lines, growing sales as a result.

Martin Ward, owner of Cowpen Lane News in Billingham, Cleveland, had doors fitted to his Imperial Tobacco gantry on Tuesday to help prepare customers and staff before the ban hits on 6 April.

"We haven't had any negative comments from customers, and I don't expect it's going to affect my cigarette sales," he said.

Susan Connolly has also installed an Imperial covered gantry at her Spar store in Pewsey, Wiltshire.

She said: "We wanted to get ours in early so we could work out any errors and get our range sorted out in time. I don't expect our sales to drop because of this."

NFRN urges retailers to use restitution process Trade-wide agreement is 'encouraging'

Better compensation for HND re-runs welcomed

by Ed Chadwick

Retailers have welcomed an increase to the rates of compensation paid when they are forced to re-run HND copies because of lateness.

Both wholesalers and the Press Distribution Forum (PDF) have agreed to pay 55p per copy to meet the additional costs incurred for second delivery drops.

The amount is an increase on the 40p paid previously and was agreed

after a request from the Press Distribution Review Panel.

The independent body, made up of retailers, wholesalers and publishers, oversees the complaints resolution process and compliance to the Press Distribution Charter.

The NFRN welcomed the new rates and urged members to use the restitution process to make sure the supply chain reimbursed them for additional costs.

News operations man-

ager Jerry Hayes said: "No member should ever be out of pocket if they have to carry out second runs and we would urge them to make a claim every time they are affected by poor service which has a major effect on their HND delivery - even if it is a one-off.

"We are encouraged that there has been a trade-wide agreement to increase these payments.

"The amount paid should be assessed to fully reflect the costs incurred by our members who did

not cause the problem but played their part in ensuring consumer satisfaction."

West country roundsman Martin Ballinger said he believed the revised rate was a fair reflection of the costs for retailers.

"It would cover the cost for me, but perhaps newsagents in more rural areas would still be left out of pocket once fuel and wages are taken into account," he said.

"I think too few retailers are claiming or realise that they can."

Big boys' bad news testament to c-stores' qualities Local stores "upped their game"

Indies' strength helps stem tide of multiples' expansion

by Steven Lambert

The strength of independent c-stores has helped to beat back competition from multiples on the high street, according to retail experts as supermarkets announced store closures.

Tesco last week revealed it would be shutting 43 existing stores, half of them Tesco Express sites, as well as scrapping 49 planned openings.

At the same time, Morrisons announced it will close 10 loss-making stores and is sacking chief executive Dalton Philips after a poor

Christmas performance, while Sainsbury's is axing 500 support jobs under its cost-cutting plans.

James Hall, symbol director at Bestway, said the news was a victory for all local stores who have "upped their game and engaged with their communities and shoppers, ensuring that customers remained loyal".

He added: "What is important is that before Tesco opened these stores it would have conducted feasibility studies into their success."

"This proves that independents and symbols can not only compete but

prosper in spite of multiple encroachment."

Naresh Purohit, owner of Marseans in Dartford, Kent, said Tesco has ceased plans to open a new store close to his business.

"Tesco expanded much too quickly and bought up too much space. Meanwhile, shopper habits have been changing and we have built a group of loyal shoppers from that. We're now looking to improve our core convenience range to take advantage of this."

Clive Black, head of research at investment group Shore Capital, predicted fall-

ing petrol prices and rising living standards will mean supermarket groups will focus primarily on improving their larger stores this year.

Simply Fresh managing director Kash Khera warned retailers against complacency, adding that discounters such as Aldi and Lidl are looking to move into small format stores this year.

He said: "We have seen that good independents can compete against the multiples, and now is the time for them to consolidate this growth and gain a bigger share of the market."

Ignite adds extra £19m

Imperial Tobacco says it has generated an additional £19m in extra revenue for retailers who have taken part in its Ignite trade partner programme.

A total of 15,000 retailers have signed up to work with the Lambert & Butler manufacturer to boost availability, improve merchandising and increase shopper engagement.

Imperial said availability levels had increased by 3% at participating stores and retailers were earning points which could be redeemed for rewards.

Karl Throssel, pictured,



owners Murrays News in Skegness, Lincolnshire, said: "It's been

an invaluable resource as it shows us which brands sell in our area, meaning we

are able to ensure we've got the right stock at all times."

Charlie Hebdo special likely to sell out quickly

Independents who ordered copies of the commemorative issue of Charlie Hebdo were expecting to sell out straight away.

The French satirical weekly was in high demand after the massacre of 12 people at its Paris office last Wednesday.

Comag had secured up to

1,000 copies of the "survivors' issue" to be imported into the UK.

David Lomas, of Lomas News in Lancashire, ordered 10 copies after several customers asked if he could stock it. "I had one customer come in and say: 'I will pay you whatever you want for it'."

"Obviously with the troubling things that happened in France last week, Charlie Hebdo has really been brought to the forefront."

"People want to see exactly what it is about. I'm expecting to sell out as soon as people find out I have it."

Amit Patel, of Belvedere News Food & Wine in Kent,

also put in an order for 10 copies and had already pre-sold five of them on Tuesday.

"I am selling it to show that terrorists can't win. The best form of response is to carry on as normal."

They both planned to display the issue on the counter.

In brief

Shop funding cut

Village shops and post offices could face a drop in support after a cut in funding for 38 Rural Community Councils (RCCs) in England.

RCCs work closely with small communities and have historically had a modest amount of funding from central government.

However, a current four-year agreement with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ends in March and RCCs have been told to expect no further funding.

Rural Shops Alliance chief executive Ken Parsons said: "We work closely with many RCCs to support village shops and post offices, particularly those run by community groups themselves."

"Rural residents get far fewer services from government than their urban equivalents."

Sales growth slows

UK retail sales declined by 0.4% on a like-for-like basis in December, compared to the previous year, according to the British Retail Consortium. On a total basis, sales were up 1%, against a 1.8% rise in December 2013. This is the slowest December growth since December 2008. Total food sales grew for the first time since April in December.

Blakemore new MD

Blakemore has announced the appointment of a new managing director to have specific responsibility for the company's wholesale distribution division. James Russell, who was previously a managing director at Rowan International, started in the new role on 5 January.

NEWS

BUSINESS

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Mike joins Budgens

Musgrave has announced the appointment of Mike Baker as its new Budgens brand director this week.

Mr Baker joins the company from Booker, where he worked as trading director and head of own brand, and has more than 28 years of experience in the retail and wholesale sector after starting his career at Sainsbury's. He will replace John Pattison, who will take over as Londis brand director this month.

"I am really pleased to be joining Budgens at what appears to be an exciting time for the brand," said Mr Baker. "I have a real passion for food retail and look forward to working with all our partners as we move towards a 'better Budgens' in 2015".

Morrisons' man leaves

Morrisons chief executive Dalton Philips is to leave his role after the supermarket group reported a fall in like-for-like sales and the closure of loss-making stores this week.

Mr Philips has agreed to stay in his current position until the end of March, having served five years at the company.

The decision by the Morrisons board comes as the company announced that like-for-like sales excluding fuel fell 3.1% in the six weeks to 4 January. In addition, it said it would be closing 10 unprofitable shops.

Morrisons chairman-elect Andrew Higginson said: "We need to return the business to growth. The board believes this is best done under new leadership."

Kishor enlists Nisa man for online project

Former Nisa trading director John Sharpe has been appointed commercial manager for a new online business being launched by independent retailer Kishor Patel.

Mr Sharpe, who left Nisa early last year following a

company restructure, is the "first major appointment" to the project, which Mr Patel said will develop closer relationships with a wider number of shoppers.

Mr Patel, who has sold off four of his convenience stores to fund the venture,

said the online sales platform will be available to food and drink store owners first, before being rolled out to other retail sectors.

He added: "I'm now in the process of establishing a team of experienced, focused and enthusiastic

people to support me with commercial, IT, finance and marketing."

Mr Sharpe said: "Having had an insight into this new online platform, and having known Kishor for the past 12 years, I'm confident of its success."

Group celebrating, but expects more 'Joining Best-one is more than just putting up a fascia'

'Show commitment' says Bestway after strong year

by Steven Lambert

Bestway is celebrating positive growth for its Best-one symbol group last year, but warned that retailers wishing to join up must "show the necessary commitment" to drive the fascia further.

The company saw net growth of 149 new stores in 2014, increasing its total number of retail sites from 1,008 last January to 1,157 this month.

However, Bestway symbol director James Hall said it had actually recruited more than 400 retailers in 2014.

He added that, at the same time, the group had been terminating the accounts of existing retailers that did not meet the "required standards" expected of them.

Mr Hall said: "Joining Best-one is more than just putting up a fascia and a couple of posters. If you

are a retailer who wants to grow your business with a focus on the categories that are going to drive convenience and want to offer shoppers the best promotions then Best-one would love to talk to you.

"When I say it's not a numbers game, I actually mean it and we have terminated accounts because they were not up to the required standard or did not show the necessary commitment."

Mr Hall said total sales through Best-one also grew 30% last year, with the majority of this growth coming from an increase in like-for-like sales from existing stores.

He added Bestway will prepare for increased competition in the convenience sector by focusing on developing its chilled and food to go offering and providing advice on 'shopper missions' to retailers.



It's a deal! Spar has been promoting its value-for-money meal deals this month with a TV ad targeted at families. The marketing campaign is supporting the convenience chain's 'all for £5' offer on stir fry ingredients, including its own brand chilli stir fry sauce and chicken breasts, and is running alongside popular programmes including Coronation Street and Emmerdale.

NEWS

NEWSTRade

WORKING WITH INDEPENDENT NEWSAGENTS TO GROW NEWSPAPER SALES

DAILY
Mirror

SUNDAY
Mirror

SUNDAY
PEOPLE

Daily
Record

sunday
mail

Wraparound decision was 'puzzling' says NFRN head of news 'We took them off and threw them in the bin' says retailer

Indies 'dismayed' as Sun wraps Charlie Hebdo news in Tesco ad

by Nicola Stewart

Independents were dismayed to find a full wrap covering the front page of The Sun as a major news story was unfolding.

The siege in France following the massacre of 12 people at the offices of satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo hit front pages across the world on Friday.

However, The Sun, which has always maintained that "front pages sell newspapers", was hidden behind a Tesco wraparound.

Dan Cock, of Premier Whitestone Stores in Devon, said many of his customers had been confused by the wrap and had taken it off before buying the paper.

"It was a big news day, and I understand that these things are probably planned months in advance, but it was incredibly bad timing.

"We ended up taking them all off after a while and chucking them in the bin. If it had been a quieter news day, we probably would have left them on, but customers were looking for that front page

on Friday."

NFRN head of news Brian Murphy added: "On one of the most important news days, it is puzzling that The Sun would decide to hide its front page behind a wraparound and possibly deter people from buying the newspaper."

The Sun was one of the dailies to fare reasonably well in December, with Monday to Friday circulation falling 7.3% compared to the previous year – ahead of the average drop of 7.5%.

The Times was once again the strongest performer, increasing sales by 1.5% Monday to Friday, while the Daily Mail stayed ahead of the curve with a drop of 4.2%.

Saturday papers had a more positive showing, with The Times posting a 5.2% increase and the Daily Mail and Financial Times falling just 3.9% and 4.5% respectively.

The Times was the only title to fall by less than 6% on a Sunday, with an average decline of 8.9% and The Sunday Mail falling 15.1% year on year.

December Monday to Friday newspaper sales

	Core sales ¹	Monthly change	Yearly change	Estimated retail margin (000s) ²	Total sales ³
Daily Mirror	786,052	-0.6%	-8.3%	£100.3	831,052
Daily Record	190,058	-0.9%	-11.5%	£230.0	195,229
Daily Star	428,036	-2.9%	-13.7%	£414.3	428,036
The Sun	1,802,945	-1.6%	-7.3%	£167.3	1,802,945
Daily Express	429,517	-0.2%	-9.6%	£57.2	429,517
Daily Mail	1,362,398	-1.4%	-4.2%	£189.7	1,437,541
Daily Telegraph	439,098	-2.0%	-10.2%	£143.2	439,098
Financial Times	39,838	-4.9%	-9.7%	£199.2	63,279
Guardian	147,786	-0.2%	-11.9%	£567.5	147,786
i	220,227	-2.1%	-6.8%	£165.2	283,972
Independent	38,094	-0.7%	-13.3%	£118.4	54,932
Times	329,842	1.0%	1.5%	£930.2	353,341
TOTAL	6,213,891	-1.3%	-7.5%	£920.1	6,466,728

December Saturday newspaper sales

	Core sales ¹	Monthly change	Yearly change	Estimated retail margin (000s) ²	Total sales ³
Daily Mirror	1,033,740	1.1%	-8.0%	£177.0	1,078,740
Daily Record	223,979	-2.7%	-11.6%	£39.5	227,948
Daily Star	393,542	-1.8%	-11.1%	£57.1	393,542
The Sun	2,207,429	-4.3%	-7.2%	£291.4	2,207,429
Daily Express	521,715	-0.7%	-7.2%	£94.9	521,715
Daily Mail	2,174,583	-2.2%	-3.9%	£418.8	2,246,196
Daily Telegraph	636,930	-3.3%	-8.7%	£305.7	636,930
Financial Times	76,667	-7.0%	-4.5%	£52.0	96,035
Guardian	310,298	-5.2%	-11.6%	£168.4	310,298
i	184,205	0.6%	-	£18.4	244,353
Independent	68,318	-4.6%	-11.4%	£29.0	84,037
Times	470,180	-1.4%	5.2%	£165.7	481,205
TOTAL	8,301,586	-2.5%	-4.3% ⁴	£1,952	8,528,428

December Sunday newspaper sales

	Core sales ¹	Monthly change	Yearly change	Estimated retail margin (000s) ²	Total sales ³
Sunday Mail	216,268	-4.1%	-15.1%	£72.7	220,082
Sunday Mirror	793,070	-1.3%	-11.0%	£199.9	838,070
People	328,387	-2.0%	-11.0%	£82.8	328,387
Daily Star Sun.	264,767	-0.3%	-11.1%	£58.5	264,767
The Sun	1,486,447	-4.7%	-10.0%	£261.6	1,486,447
Sunday Express	387,385	-1.9%	-8.5%	£115.0	387,385
Sunday Post	188,457	-2.0%	-12.9%	£58.0	188,457
Mail on Sunday	1,328,255	-2.1%	-6.2%	£418.4	1,399,369
Ind. on Sunday	44,105	-4.3%	-10.4%	£24.3	96,923
Observer	195,193	-3.3%	-12.2%	£141.5	195,193
Sun. Telegraph	372,126	-2.7%	-9.9%	£169.3	372,126
Sunday Times	746,357	-2.0%	-2.8%	£391.8	757,583
TOTAL	6,350,817	-2.7%	-8.9%	£1,994	6,534,789

¹ Core sales are newstrade sales and pre-paid subscriptions in the UK and Ireland; ² ERM is the total income to retailers for one day's sales, calculated using margin statistics printed in RN; ³ Total sales includes bulk sales; ⁴ Reflects inclusion of i compared to 2013 figure; Source: ABC

Beano is the bestseller

The Beano Annual 2015 has taken the title of best-selling annual in the UK after pulling in more than £1m in sales before Christmas.

The DC Thomson comic beat rivals such as Lego, Peppa Pig, Doctor Who and One Direction to secure the number one spot – selling 50% more copies than its closest competitor.

DC Thomson head of brands Tim Collins said: "The purchase of a Beano annual is a classic British tradition that has been shared among families for many generations, so it's vital that we continue to meet the expectations of our loyal fans and a real privilege to have that effort recognised this way."

'Sunday Best' margins

*Pence per copy in England and Wales only

SUNDAY
Mirror

25.20p

SUNDAY
PEOPLE

25.20p

sunday
mail

33.60p



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NEWS

PRODUCTS



“Bake Yourself Silly” campaign Packs redesigned for Red Nose Day

Maltesers sets £1m Comic Relief target

by Nadia Alexandrou

Maltesers is once again teaming up with Comic Relief to raise money for Red Nose Day.

The Mars-owned chocolate brand aims to raise £1m through its new “Bake Yourself Silly” campaign for Comic Relief with a 5p donation from each special pack bought.

All Maltesers and Maltesers Teasers packs have been specially redesigned with a

baking theme for Red Nose Day, and will be available to retailers from 25 January.

The campaign will be supported by a bespoke TV advert running from 1 February until Red Nose Day on 13 March, as well as a media partnership with BBC Good Food.

Having already raised £2.5m since it first partnered with Comic Relief in 2011, Maltesers is confident it will hit its £1m target, with its new Maltesers

bars and large sharing pack formats featuring for the first time in the campaign.

Bep Dhaliwal, trade communications manager at Mars, said: “The home baking industry is booming and we’re combining this trend with the power of Maltesers and Comic Relief to create a great opportunity for retailers to drive sales in the home baking category, as well as raising money for a good cause.”

Dairy Milk £7m campaign

Cadbury Dairy Milk has launched a £7m marketing campaign to help drive sales of its tablets and countlines. The drive will be made up of TV, PR, outdoor, digital and in-store activity.

Matthew Williams, marketing activation director for chocolate at Mondelez International, said: “Focusing on both tablets and countlines provides a significant opportunity to drive incremental sales; we know there is little overlap in terms of shoppers and usage occasions and combined they have a reach of 32 million consumers so the opportunity for retailers is huge.”

Panatella single released

Ritmeester has launched a single stick variant of its popular Royal Dutch Panatella.

Outers of 20 will be available through all major cash and carry depots wholesalers at £12.99, offering a PoR of 22% when sold at the £1 RRP.

The outer size has been introduced to appeal to indies and presentation tins are available from Ritmeester territory managers.

The company said that single cigars continue to represent a significant share of sales through convenience and appeal to consumers who want to buy a single stick.

Hot products for your shopping list



Ritmeester’s Royal Dutch Panatella will now be available in a single stick variant, with a RRP of £1



Dairy Milk countlines and tablets will be supported by a £7m media spend

PRODUCTS

Energy drink aimed at 16-45-year-olds Sector growing 12.5%

Lucozade Grafruitti exclusive for indies

by Steven Lambert

Lucozade Ribena Suntory has revealed its latest Lucozade Energy Grafruitti flavour will only be available to buy from independent retailers.

It marks the second exclusive product for local stores this month following Ferrero's launch of limited edition Kinder Bueno Dark.

Grafruitti features a combination of mixed berries and citrus flavours and is being aimed at 16-45-year-olds, according to Lucozade Ribena Suntory.

The new line will be available to retailers until the end of the year, and replaces the brand's existing Melonade variant.

It follows on from a host of new flavours introduced to Lucozade Energy last year, which the manufacturer claimed is driving 12.5% growth in the sports and energy drink sector.

Matt Gouldsmith, head of route to market at Lucozade Ribena Suntory, said its previous special edition flavour, Lucozade Energy Mango Mandarin, achieved £9m in retail sales, and expects similar figures

for its latest launch.

He added: "The independent channel remains an incredibly important market to us, and we know new products are the key to growth in this category."

"We have been trialling Grafruitti with shoppers, and 84% of 16-45-year-olds said they intend to purchase the product."

Grafruitti will be available in 95p pricemarked and non-pricemarked 380ml bottles and 500ml bottles (RRP £1.15) and is being supported with PoS material and a social media campaign.



Levi's latest Vimto is aiming to brighten up January with a colourful rebrand for its Levi Roots tropical soft drinks range. Changes to packs include new images of brand creator Levi Roots and updated on-pack messages encouraging shoppers to 'Put Some Music in Your Glass'.

Euro favourite makes its way to UK

United Biscuits (UB) is taking inspiration from the continent for the launch of a new biscuit line.

McVitie's DeliChoc is a thickly-coated Belgian chocolate biscuit in three varieties - milk, dark and

white chocolate. DeliChoc will be backed by a £2m TV advertising campaign set to break during the spring. The product is sold in 150g tray packs and is offered in outers of six pricemarked packs for the independent convenience

channel. UB said the product had already proved popular in Europe, having originated in France and Belgium as part of its Delacre portfolio.

The manufacturer anticipates sales of at least £6.5m during the first year.

Hot products for your shopping list



United Biscuits is bringing its McVitie's DeliChoc range to the UK



Lucozade Energy Grafruitti will only be available from independent retailers



Major media coming to encourage customers to explore the range



Make sure you're fully stocked!

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NEWS

REGIONAL



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Old Ben's support on the web

Former employees of the newstrade and their families can find out more about sheltered housing available through a new website launched by industry charity Old Ben Homes.

The site – www.oldben-homes.org.uk – is devoted to showing prospective residents the warm welcome that awaits them in one of the charity's estates.

The charity has two estates, one in Lilleshall, Shropshire and one at Seaford, West Sussex.

The charity was part of the NewstrAid Benevolent Fund but became a separate charity in the 1970s.

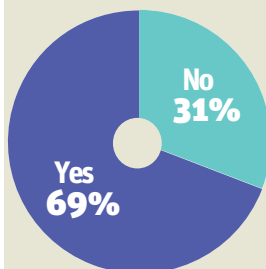
"Old Ben Homes provide a wonderful community into which individuals and couples from the UK newstrade can move" says David Blundell, chairman of the Old Ben Homes trustees.

"And now we have an online window into what we have to offer."

RN reader poll

Last week we asked:

Will you be among the growing number of independent retailers offering home grocery deliveries in 2015?



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Is the new 55p per copy compensation rate for retailers who have to carry out second delivery runs for late HND papers a fair payment?

Have your vote now at
betterRetailing.com

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Gang jailed over illicit tobacco sales

Four men involved in a scheme to transport and supply illicit tobacco in the Greater Manchester area have been jailed this month.

The gang members – Mark O'Neill, Cyril Crowe, Christopher Bridgeman

and Gerard Melville – were caught following an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs.

Officers found the men had been involved in storing and moving vast quantities of contraband around

the north west, evading £425,000 in taxes. They were also carrying around large sums of cash, thought to be the profits from their illegal business.

O'Neill was sentenced to 46 months in prison, while

Crowe and Bridgeman must each serve 31 months behind bars. Melville was sentenced to 22 months in jail suspended for a 12 months, and must carry out 200 hours of community work.

Titles' price hikes 'a surprise' but initiative welcomed Response 'positive' says publisher

Scottish paper's voucher scheme set to boost HND

by Nicola Stewart

The Herald is encouraging retailers to sign customers up to its new subscription offer in a bid to support home news delivery and shop saves.

Scottish newsagents were sent posters earlier this week promoting the limited time offer that runs until 30 January.

The voucher-based subscription provides customers with a 31% discount if

they commit to seven days, 26% for Monday to Saturday and 28% on a weekend-only basis.

Head of circulation at the Glasgow-based title, Malcolm MacDonald, said retailers had been asked to make customers aware of the savings by pointing them to advertisements inside the paper.

"The response so far has been very encouraging," he said.

The offer follows a 10p

price rise across the weekday and Saturday editions of the paper, pushing the cover to £1.30 and £1.70 respectively.

The retailer margin remains at 23%, meaning the pence per copy profit for retailers increased from 27.6p to 29.9p on weekdays and 36.8p to 39.10p on Saturdays.

The Herald last raised its cover price in August 2013.

HND specialist Rory O'Brien, of Papersdirect

in Glasgow, said he was surprised by the price increase but he welcomed any promotion encouraging readers to subscribe.

"I always think subscription offers are positive. It has the customer buying the paper every day and it saves them a bit of money."

He said he had several people cancel their subscriptions prior to the price rise but he hoped the subscription offer may lead to some new business.



Dream come true for Brighton man

An independent retailer in Brighton has realised a 20-year dream by opening a store exclusively selling independent magazines.

Martin Skelton, pictured, has been in business for four weeks now and said the reaction from customers so far had been very encouraging.

"The response from people in Brighton has been unbelievable," he said. "From a sales point of view, we are achieving what we hoped, plus a bit better. There is nothing but good news."

The store, simply called Magazine Brighton, has up to 200 titles on the shelf at any one time, but Mr Skelton said he had the capability to order in up to 4,000 titles.

He sources about 95% through the newstrade and orders the remainder directly from independent publishers.

His range extends from a second edition of Lady magazine priced at £27 through to Umbrella at £6 and The Happy Reader at £3.50.

Mr Skelton's policy is "if it is available in WH Smith, we do not sell it".

COMING UP IN

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NEWS

REGIONAL



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Farewell to country's oldest newsagents

One of the country's oldest newsagents will close next month after a century of trading.

Ian Simpson said he had taken the decision to close London's News and Toys in York with a "heavy heart" because of market trends.

He has worked at the shop for 37 years, starting as a paperboy, and bought the business in 2000 from Derek London, grandson of its original owner, who began the business in 1914.

Mr Simpson said: "Market trends have changed and people's shopping habits have changed."

He said he planned to sell HND rounds and secure the future of newspaper delivery in the area.

Mr Simpson was added to the NFRN Yorkshire district's roll of honour at a meeting this week.

Cover price rise and pro-rata terms welcomed

Retailers have welcomed cover price rises and a pro-rata terms increase on two regional titles in the midlands.

The Derby Telegraph has moved from 45p to 50p and the Leicester Mercury from 50p to 60p this week, with terms maintained on the two Local World titles.

Terence Hartshorne of Markeaton News in Derby said: "I've had one cancellation of the Derby Telegraph, but I think it still represents good value for money."

"We've got a good relationship with the Telegraph and we will talk to them about promotions this year."

Don't be tempted by illicit alcohol, retailers warned

Retailers in Nottingham have been warned not to be lured into stocking illicit alcohol following the seizure of 310,000 litres of duty-free beer and wine.

An investigation by HM

Revenue and Customs officers uncovered a huge haul of duty-free alcohol hidden in an industrial unit this month.

This included 295,000 litres of beer and 15,000

litres of wine estimated to be worth £350,000 in lost duty.

Stuart Taylor, assistant director of criminal investigation at HMRC, said: "We want to warn local

shopkeepers who are being offered cheap deals on alcohol to buy their stock from legitimate and reputable sources, as selling duty free or counterfeit is a serious criminal offence."

SGF shines spotlight on value of indies



The Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF) highlighted the economic and social importance of independent convenience stores at an exhibition in Scottish parliament last week.

The organisation had a stall outside the entrance to the debating chamber at Holyrood, engaging with more than 80 MSPs, including first minister Nicola Sturgeon and the new leader of the Labour Party in Scotland Jim Murphy (pictured with SGF president Abdul Majid).

Retailers Dennis Williams, of Broadway Premier in Edinburgh, and Saleem Sadiq, of Spar in Glasgow, were on hand to share their views.

Working with the

University of Stirling, the SGF is collating data from its members, which shows that a typical convenience store can reinvest anywhere between £250,000 and £440,000 back into the local economy by using local suppliers, tradespeople and providing jobs for local people.

The exhibition was sponsored by Scottish National Party MSP Gordon MacDonald. "Convenience stores are one of the cornerstones of a community in the same way as the primary school, the community centre, the post office and the pub," he said.

The SGF is now considering proposing a Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Convenience Stores.

Businesses cashing in over government rebate Retailers falsely threatened with court

MP questions 'morals' of business rate service firms

by Ed Chadwick

Parliament's local shops champion Simon Danczuk MP has accused surveyors offering no-win, no-fee business rates services of being "unethical if not immoral".

Mr Danczuk said he had received a string of complaints from retailers who had been asked to settle bills following a rates rebate.

The £1,000 government rebate has been given to all shops with a rateable value of £54,000 or less.

But BBC Radio 4's You and Yours programme was told that companies had been trying to pass the rebate off as their own work and told retailers they now owed up to £320.

Among the companies named during the programme was the Rating and Valuation Agency, based in Heywood, Lancashire.

"This is a handout from the government to help retailers through what have been some difficult times," said Mr Danczuk, who chairs the All Party

Parliamentary Group on Small Shops.

"This business needs to think again about the way it approaches small businesses. I have written to business minister Jo Swinson and the chancellor.

"I am checking whether this is illegal. The behaviour of this company is unethical if not immoral."

Mr Danczuk said other companies were asking for upfront fees of as much as £800, despite a success rate of just 10%.

Two retailers were told that they were bound to

make the payments because of clauses in the small print and threatened with court action.

One told the programme he would rather return the £1,000 than pay the fee.

The Rating and Valuation Agency told the programme that it reviews "all aspects of incorrect valuations and that can include any rebates available".

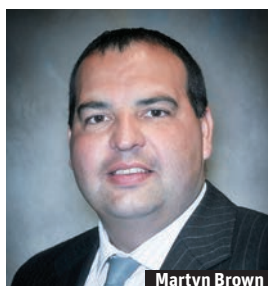
A Treasury spokesman added: "There is no place for third parties to prey on small businesses and charge them for relief that they are entitled to."

YOUR REGION

NFRN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT SOUTH WALES 05.01.2015



Jenny Sims reports from the NFRN South Wales district council meeting



Martyn Brown

'New blood' will help newsagents

National president Martyn Brown told the meeting that despite falling newspaper sales, he believed there was a future for retail newsagents.

But there had to be a willingness to challenge the publishing industry and to grasp business opportunities and adopt new ways of working, he said.

He appealed to delegates to help ensure a strong future for newsagents by encouraging younger members to get involved with the NFRN, from grass roots to national level, and to "make way" for them as election candidates.

The federation needed "new blood" to help effect change, he said.

Reporting on his recent talks with the Press Distribution Forum (PDF), Mr Brown said he found it "scary" they had no idea where they would be in five years' time.

To ensure a long-term future there was a need for publishers, wholesalers and retailers to be working together on a long-term plan, he told members.

To achieve this, the federation needed statistics about problems and issues – as soon as they arose.

"We need members to give the helpline a ring," he said, and asked for the district's help in passing on the message to all its members.

"I still want to be selling

and delivering newspapers in 10 years' time," he added.

Meanwhile, the NFRN is looking to reverse the trend of falling membership and is looking for opportunities to expand, he said. This could include a merger with the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP), with whom they are to present a proposal later in January.

Touching on benefits to members, he suggested the district consider recommending to all its branches that their members join the NFRN's Credit Union.

Concerns raised over Trinity prices

District president Matt Clark expressed serious concerns about the effect price rises on Trinity Mirror papers the Western Mail and South Wales Echo would have on sales.

He said Alan Tyldesley, Trinity Mirror divisional newspaper sales director, had invited him to a meeting later in January, having written to him expressing "disappointment" about the increases and other issues.

Mr Clark said he had been losing sales from the first day of the price rises and expected to lose more. Customers were angry that the Echo was now more expensive than the Daily Mail and that



Matt Clark



We need members to give the helpline a ring

Martyn Brown

NFRN national president on the need for retailers to alert federation of problems and issues

the Western Mail cost the same as The Times, yet the quality of both Trinity Mirror papers was continually declining.

Mr Clark also complained that, while putting up their prices, the publisher had slashed retailers' margins to 19% for those on its ambassador scheme and only 16% to those who weren't.

Dee Goberdhan, national councillor, reported a problem with tote boxes "not being received" and their 18kg weight being "hard to manage".



Dee Goberdhan

Issues to discuss with Assembly

Reporting on NFRN plans for a reception and meeting with Welsh Assembly members, Matt Clark said he had written to Adrian Roper, NFRN's head of public affairs, suggesting points for discussion.

Issues he suggested be raised included business rates, white paper on tobacco, retail crime, illicit tobacco, town centre policies and the need to regenerate, carriage charges and the monopoly within the newstrade.

Membership fall is 'frightening'

Member services manager Chris Appleton reported the drop in membership figures was "frightening".

Some were due to shop

transfers but the main reason was business closures.

Despite gaining more than 30 new members from January to end of November, district membership figures were down by 23 for the period.

He issued a reminder that "going dark" was only three months away, warning members to be prepared or risk a £5,000 fine, or possible six month prison sentence or both.

He said: "It's got to be addressed and done right."

There were various options, but members could borrow up to £7,500 through the Credit Union.

He also drew attention to the JTI scam alert about tobacco vouchers offering money off products.

Members were advised to contact their local trading standards department if customers attempted to use them.

Plans for social media workshop

The district is to take up an offer from Business Wales for training support and is to ask them to organise a social media workshop for members.

This will include use of Facebook, Twitter and other digital platforms to help promote goods and services to customers.

District donates to Asok fund

The district donated £400 to the fund set up to help the family of 24-year-old Rushaan Asok, who was brutally stabbed while working at an Aylesbury store.

Mr Asok had only been in the UK for a few weeks and the money, along with funds from other NFRN districts, would help his family to support him.

LETTERS

email letters@newtrade.co.uk
tel 020 7689 0600



The opinions on this page do not necessarily represent those of the editor

Letters may be altered by the editor for reasons of clarity or of length

WEIGHTY MATTERS FOR SMITHS NEWS

I have some concerns about the weight of newspaper bundles and tote boxes and how badly wrapped some of the bundles that come in are.

On the last Saturday of November, we had one bundle come in that was 22kg – four kg more than the agreed 18kg limit.

Also, it wasn't wrapped properly.

I am concerned mostly for the safety of my staff because it is too heavy for them to be carrying through the store.

It is something that happens often, especially at the weekends when the papers are heavier. Saturday is a particular issue.

I am looking to see if Smiths News could keep the weights well below 18kg, rather than keeping them so close to that top mark.

When I spoke to the helpline about it, I was told to ask a man to carry it. I then rang through to Newport and was told a night manager would look into the problem.

I am just asking for more consideration with regard to keeping the boxes from being too heavy.

Dee Goberdhan,
Albany Road Post Office,
Cardiff

A Smiths News spokesman responds: "Thank you RN for bringing this issue to our attention. We have contacted Dee Goberdhan to apologise and discuss the issue further. Our policy and operating practices for bundle and tote weight is aligned to industry standard for handling goods, and we are investigating the issues raised."



One of Dee Goberdhan's newspaper bundles weighed in at a thumping 22kg

How hard can it be to pack the correct papers?

I am astounded once again by the inability of Menzies to accurately pick and pack newspapers.

On Sunday 4 January, I should have received copies of the Sunday Times. Supplements were all in order and on checking the pack for newspapers, I discovered additional copies of The Telegraph packed instead of The Times.

As usual, Menzies was not able to get the papers to

me on Sunday, resulting in lost sales and revenue to my business.

Then again on Saturday 10 January, I received supplements for the Daily Telegraph, but on checking the pack of newspapers, the quantity stated were nowhere to be seen.

Once again, Menzies failed to get papers to me, resulting in lost sales and revenue across my business.

How difficult is it to pick and pack papers accurately with the information readily available to the packers?

Does Menzies have any idea of the impact these errors have on our businesses? I think not.

When will Menzies get these fundamental basics sorted out? I shan't hold my breath.

Iain Paton

Cullen Corner Shop,
Cullen, Banffshire, Scotland

A Menzies spokesman responds: "We apologise for the inconvenience that these errors have caused Mr Paton and will call him directly to discuss the issue.

We have identified where this error is occurring and are putting additional measures in place at the branch to ensure better accuracy when packing. We encourage Mr Paton to contact us again if this problem persists."

#TOP TWEETS



Who's saying what in the retailing world this week?

@LOMASNEWS

Charlie Hebdo special on sale this Friday. Register your interest with us now.

@CavePostOffice

Cards for all occasions, come and see for yourself. Don't forget your loyalty card!

@EDiamond136

I didn't know Creme Eggs had changed, but some customers were saying it was easier to bite into the shell. After 10 weeks on sale, no complaints.

@LondisRetford

As promised, a new week of deals. Don't forget your receipt for a chance of winning a whole lot of goodies.

@jackiesnews

Blustery day! 3,000 customers delivered to hours ago aren't bothered! Feet up at home having a read. Treat yourself #HND

@FordVillageShop

Back to normal winter hours. Shop is open from 8 o'clock until 2 o'clock #8am #2pm #winter-hours #shopopen #comeandsayhi

@richardsnews1

Where would you travel to first if you won tomorrow night's Euromillions £24m? NYC or Vegas?

@MoransLtd

Brrrrrr! Now that's a day for piping hot, home-made soup. We've got loads of different soups to choose from.

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OPINION



NEWS • CONVENIENCE • PROFIT

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Your say

Which supplier deals or promotions have you found most effective in the post-Christmas trading period?

Our main focus for January is actually HND, rather than in-store promotions.

We have been going out and canvassing in the area and we have taken on a few new customers. The winter months

are the time when people are

a bit more keen to have their papers delivered.

Ray Monelle
Orchard News,
Weston-super-Mare,
Somerset

We have several on at the moment. We do all the promotions from Booker and have all the PoS on those.



We have half price on a few lines, including Cathedral City. We also have Heinz mayonnaise at £1.50. It does help.

It draws customers in and then once they come in we can sell them other things as well.

Jatin Naik
Marketplace News,
Mansfield,
Nottinghamshire

We have all the deals from Nisa. We have sugar at 50p. That has definitely been a popular one with customers.

They have been coming in and buying multiple packs at a time. We also have Frosties and Kellogg's at £1 a box.

We have also had help from our local milk supplier to be able to offer two litres for £1.

Andrew Newton
Nisa Local,
Brierley Hill,
West Midlands

Your stock

With Valentine's Day and Easter approaching, what are you doing to drive sales of spring confectionery in your store?

We have got bins out for Easter eggs and Easter bags and a display in the window for Valentine's Day.

Most of the products are price-marked so we don't have any price specials.

I'm a CTN and most of my major customers are school-children so they will buy Easter eggs all year round.

We got them in before Christmas and they are selling really well.

Boxes of chocolate won't go until the last few days before Valentine's Day.

Rajesh Ganatra
Sweet News,
Luton,
Bedfordshire

Christmas and I think we were one of the first to have them out, which is nice.

Dee Goberdhan
Albany Road Post Office (WH Smith Local),
Cardiff

We will be doing the run of the mill stuff but we won't be doing any full displays.

I will have Cadbury Creme Eggs and MaltEaster bunnies but that's about it.

We used to sell a lot, maybe five boxes of Creme Eggs and four or five MaltEaster bunnies but that has been reduced to about one box each now. Last year I was left with a lot of waste.

I think that's thanks to Sainsbury's opening up down the road. That's why I'm not pushing it.

Rish Patel
Hill Top 2,
Kinston-upon-Thames,
Surrey



YOUR ISSUE

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DON'T LET THE CONMEN SPOIL YOUR YEAR

The start of a new year represents the chance for many independent retailers to try out different profit-making schemes in their businesses.

Unfortunately, it also appears that criminals and fraudsters are keeping up their own resolutions for 2015 by developing new ways to con store owners out of their hard-earned cash.

Already this month RN has received a warning from Imperial Tobacco about shoppers attempting to use fake vouchers to claim £3 off JPS tobacco.

While the manufacturer was quick to inform businesses and the trade press about the scam, it confirmed a number of retailers across the UK had been approached by people attempting to use the dodgy coupons.

The potential threat to retailers is so great that the NFRN has published on its website its own set of five scams for retailers to watch out for this year.

So how can independents identify a potential swindle and what can they do to prevent it? The advice from suppliers, organisations and other store owners is to be vigilant, train your staff and report as much as you can to the relevant authorities.

Voucher scams

When Malcolm's Stores owner Paul Cheema was alerted by a staff member about a shopper attempting to pay for tobacco with a suspicious looking voucher, he immediately took action.

He says: "We've trained our staff up to look out for this sort of thing and they refused the transaction."

"We keep a log book for incidents like this and we stopped taking all vouchers there and then, and we have had conversations with our JTI rep about it."

JTI later confirmed it was aware of a number of similar incidents taking place in the West Midlands, and was working with local

authorities to clamp down on fraudsters.

Jeremy Blackburn, head of communications at JTI, says: "JTI does not produce or circulate money-off vouchers or incentives to

pretend to be calling up from a reputable company and, while retailers may be able to identify a bogus caller, it can become trickier during busy shopping hours or if an inexperienced member



Cybercrime is another area where retailers must be extra vigilant

consumers redeemable against the price of its tobacco products from UK retailers.

"Upon identifying a potentially fraudulent voucher, we advise retailers to refuse to accept it as a valid form of payment and to immediately contact their local trading standards department."

"We also urge retailers to keep CCTV footage of anyone caught attempting to use scam vouchers as it could help trading standards in their investigations."

Retailers can also find out more details about their local trading standards team at www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office.

Cold-calling scams

Cold-calling scams are often used by scammers to trick businesses into giving out sensitive information. Quite often, con artists will

of staff answers the phone.

PayPoint says it often hears from independents receiving calls from people claiming to work for the company or on its behalf, who will often ask retailers to perform a transaction on their terminals.

PayPoint head of corporate affairs Peter Brooker reminds retailers that it will never ask them to carry out such actions over the phone. He also warned business owners that fraudsters will often use phone numbers of trusted suppliers to hide their identity further, adding that PayPoint's phone numbers are blocked when it makes genuine calls to retailers.

He adds: "If you receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from PayPoint, or working on its behalf, asking you to carry out a payment transaction on your PayPoint terminal, don't."

Online scams

Cybercrime is another area where retailers must be extra vigilant this year, according to the NFRN.

In particular, the federation urges caution over suspicious tax return emails, which could be part of a wider 'phishing' scam. Clicking on one of these emails could lead to criminals obtaining vital information such as security passwords and credit card details.

Steve Singh, deputy head of operations at HMRC digital security, says any dubious-looking emails should be sent to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk and then permanently deleted.

He adds: "We can, and do, close these websites down and we continue our efforts to work with law enforcement agencies around the world to bring down the criminals behind these scams."

The cloned pre-paid card

Last year, RN reported on a number of cases where unfortunate retailers had been tricked into giving away money on prepaid cards.

The con involves scammers handing a 'cloned' card to staff, counting out the cash they want loading onto it, "discovering" they're £10 short and saying they're going to get it from their car.

In that time, 20 minutes later, the retailer realises they aren't coming back and try to reverse the transaction, only to discover that the fraudster has already withdrawn the cash using the original card.

While stories of this particular fraud have died down recently, PayPoint says this remains a big threat to local stores and reminds retailers to never complete a transaction until they have received the full cash amount from the shopper.

The firm adds anyone who does fall victim to this crime should report it immediately to the contact centre of their terminal operator.

NEVILLE RHODES

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Enough is enough

Failure to deal with delivery times and allocation has cost retailers as well as newspaper and magazine publishers dearly. The case for a competition inquiry is stronger than ever, writes Neville Rhodes

It is now more than five years since the Office of Fair Trading turned down a request from the NFRN for a competition inquiry into news distribution, concluding that the existing publisher-led system did not prevent, restrict or distort competition.

Not surprisingly, the NFRN did not agree with the decision, appealed against it, but lost. As a result retailers apparently have to live with the present system, at least until it collapses under the weight of the self-serving practices of its key players.

But must retailers put up with it indefinitely? The case for a competition inquiry is much stronger now than it was five years ago, not least because the system's overall performance has been so dismal.

Sales of national newspapers through UK retailers have declined by more than 30% since 2009, from 3.4 billion copies a year to around 2.34 billion, while newstrade sales of magazines have fared even worse.

Some of this loss is down to the impact of digital media, but the industry's continuing failure to deal effectively with the two vital elements of print distribution, timely delivery and reliable copy allocation, is undoubtedly costing sales – but as nobody really knows how many, nobody is doing much about it.

Far worse, of course, is the sense of demoralisation that this is having on retailers, many of whom, I suspect, have become indifferent to the fate of newspapers and magazines, and only stick with them because they feel they can't afford not to.

For retailers who are fully committed to the categories, however, the frustration caused by the distribution system's failures is vented on RN's letters page almost every week. Recent examples include cuts to newspaper supplies below average net sale level; poor state of top and bottom copies in bundles, rendering them unfit for sale; "the idiocy" of packing magazines in already wet tote boxes; difficulties with obtaining specialist titles; constraints and

inhibits on supplies not being adhered to, or withdrawn without notice; and much more in similar vein.

As one retailer wrote: "If we treated our customers as [our wholesaler] treats us, they would certainly go elsewhere" – and this surely is the key issue.

The absence of competition, reinforced by long-term contracts, has removed the need to value or even simply to satisfy retailers,

and it is this that is dragging the trade down.

Self-regulation by the industry, urged on the industry by the OFT, clearly isn't working. The Press Distribution Forum, set up by the publishers and wholesalers, has done little to show that it is seriously concerned about the trade. It might benefit from participation by the NFRN and the other retailer associations, but their experience with previous industry bodies has understandably left them deeply sceptical.

That's why the NFRN is calling for the Competition and Markets Authority, the successor to the OFT as the country's competition regulator, to hold a full inquiry into the market for newspapers and magazines, and to propose changes.

It might seem wasteful to have two or more news suppliers serving an area, but it may be the only way to give the industry the shake-up it so badly needs.

Neville Rhodes is a former retailer and freelance journalist



★ Every paper counts...

+ **Selling papers is still good business** – if you can get enough of it. National newspapers provide around £430m a year in retail margin, plus a bit more in insertion allowances and voucher handling fees. But the margin is shrinking fast. Five years ago it was around £520m, meaning it has fallen by about 17% in cash terms – even after average cover price increases of around 21% over the same period. Based on the ABC figures for November 2014, the weighted average cover price of national daily and Sunday newspapers sold through UK newsagents was 80.1p, producing an average gross profit of 18.2p per copy. That's why every copy counts – and why everybody in the supply chain should act as if they believe it.

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Interview by **Tom Gockelen-Kozlowski**
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tel 020 7689 3361

Purple WiFi

By offering free wi-fi, retailers can increase the time customers spend in their store. By offering Purple WiFi, says CEO Gavin Wheeldon, retailers can also gain a wealth of information on their customers which could help improve their marketing

RETAIL NEWSAGENT What technology can you offer retailers in 2015? What benefits does it offer?

GAVIN WHEELDON Purple WiFi provides a fast, secure, social wi-fi solution to retailers wishing to offer free wi-fi to visitors.

RN How does internet access enable an improved customer experience?

GW Purple WiFi allows customers to log in with ease through social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Google – and enables retailers to deliver a branded wi-fi experience while marketing to present and previous customers.

RN What experience have you got of working with smaller independent retailers?

GW Our clients range in size from small independents to large chains. Within chains we also work with individual sites to meet their local needs; for example Nisa requested support for a Cardiff store.

RN How are independent retailers' needs different to larger stores?

GW We find that independent retailers and store managers within chains are keen to offer wi-fi as a means of competing and gaining customer loyalty on a local level.

While these benefits are important to larger retailers too, we find that larger clients such as Boots Alliance and Pandora are also keen to use data to optimise in terms of space planning and POS placement, as well as enhancing the data they already hold within their loyalty schemes.

RN What does your service offer ahead of other internet providers?

GW Today's customers expect free wi-fi wherever they go, yet venues and shops are having to face the cost of installing wi-fi connectivity and equipment, with little in return.

Most wi-fi providers keep all the data about who is logging in, but Purple WiFi passes this valuable information to the retailer via an easy-to-use portal.

The Purple Portal provides businesses of all sizes with rich analytics and detailed demographic information to enable more effective marketing.

RN What kind of information does this include?

GW Behind the scenes, retailers can tap into a wealth of analytics about their wi-fi users, such as age, gender, location, visit frequency, dwell times and more.

Purple WiFi's location-based services also offer rich data about who comes into the store, how often they visit, how long they stay and other valuable guest insights.

By harnessing the beacons wi-fi-enabled devices regularly send out, retailers can gain a deeper understanding of customer behaviour.

RN What other services can you offer retailers?

GW If retailers want to take it a step further, Purple WiFi provides X/Y Location Services so that the store



“Most wi-fi providers keep all the data about who is logging in, but Purple WiFi passes this valuable information to the retailer

owner can understand the movement of shoppers within their building, and then deliver personalised or relevant messages when they reach certain areas of the store.

RN What does your innovation cost retailers and how long before they can expect a return on investment?

GW The cost varies depending on the size of the customer and the functionality required, ranging from a few hundred pounds for a small single venue to considerably more for a nationwide retailer.

The return on investment of the solution also relates directly to how the business utilises its functionality. For example, Purple WiFi customers have recouped their costs within a month based on additional customers and customer spend achieved through targeted coupons and offers.

For other customers it has taken longer based on their initial investment and the speed at which they deploy the service.

RN How can retailers highlight that they offer your service? What marketing, communications or info tools do you recommend?

GW From an end user perspective, the service is free, secure and offers easy access wi-fi, and we find our retailer customers are able to publicise this successfully through in-store PoS and literature.

Retailers can also apply their own branding to the logon process, including the password of the wi-fi and the splash page that customers use to log on.

** Company CV **

Company Purple WiFi
CEO Gavin Wheeldon

Profile Purple WiFi is a provider of wireless internet to businesses who wish to offer the service free to their customers. By using its Purple Portal businesses are then able to track demographic and usage information on their customers.

Latest news In the last months of 2014 Purple WiFi launched services in Australia and Canada after signing major contracts to provide analytics information to media and data networks firms.



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PRICEWATCH

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES

by **Nadia Alexandrou**

email nadia.alexandrou@newtrade.co.uk

tel 020 7689 3350

BEST-SELLING OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES PRICES AROUND THE UK

PRODUCT	RRP	AVERAGE	RETAILER 1	RETAILER 2	RETAILER 3	RETAILER 4	RETAILER 5
Calpol Sugar Free Suspension Liquid 100ml	£3.59	£3.66	£3.59	–	£2.99	£3.29	£3.49
Lemsip Cold & Flu Original Lemon Capsules 5s	£3.85	£2.63	£2.99	£2.39	£2.99	£2.29	£2.45
Calpol Six Plus 80ml	£3.59	£3.67	£3.59	£3.59	£3.99	£3.29	–
Nurofen Tablets 12s	£2.39	£2.46	£2.39	£2.55	£2.69	–	£1.99
Strepsils Honey & Lemon 16s	£2.69	£2.87	£2.69	£2.79	–	£2.59	£2.75
Benylin Chesty Adult 150ml	£5.20	£4.78	£3.45	£3.99	£3.29	£4.77	£4.60
Imodium Capsules 6s	£3.29	£3.53	£4.29	£4.19	£4.99	£3.25	£4.40
Lemsip Max All In One Sachets 5s	£3.89	£3.89	£2.89	£2.79	£3.39	£2.79	£3.55
Lemsip All In One Sachets 5s	£4.19	£4.23	£4.19	£4.29	£3.29	–	£4.19
Anadin Extra 12s	£2.12	£2.35	£2.12	£2.19	£2.29	£1.85	£2.25
Vicks Vaporub 50g	£2.99	£3.18	£2.99	£2.99	£2.99	–	£3.19
Gaviscon Aniseed Liquid 150ml	£4.09	£4.13	£4.09	£4.39	£3.99	–	£4.29

CALPOL SUGAR FREE SUSPENSION LIQUID 100ml Price distribution %



Average selling prices and best-selling products rankings are sourced by EDFM Ltd from EPoS data from over 2,000 independent retailers throughout the UK. The prices given on this page are the prices at point of purchase.

RRPs are sourced from Booker and are correct at time of going to print.

OTC medicines pricing strategies

RETAILER

1



NAME SUNITA KANJI

STORE Family Shopper

LOCATION Bolton, Lancashire

SIZE 2,000sq ft

TYPE residential

We stick loosely to the prices set by head office. We get a message every time a price changes, and our decision to follow it will depend on how well it's selling in our store. If a medicine is selling too slowly, we delete it from our list. Pro Plus is definitely our bestseller here – not just because we have students in our area. In the winter we bring out more cold and flu products, whereas in summer we replace them with antihistamines. We get margins of around 25%, and keep all medicines behind the counter.

RETAILER

2



NAME PAUL MATHER

STORE Sherston Post Office Stores

LOCATION Malmesbury, Wiltshire

SIZE 1,350sq ft

TYPE village

Even though this is one of the less price-sensitive categories, we just tend to stick to Bestway's RRP's. We don't want to send a message to customers that they should only come to us as a last resort, and if you compare our prices to the supermarkets you will see there's not a huge difference. Having decent prices is especially important for us given that we're in a village, so it's easy to both secure and lose regular customers and we don't want to be silly with prices. We've made our own medicines stand and even have our own designated chemist section.

RETAILER

3

NAME RANJIT SINGH**STORE** Parans Minimarket**LOCATION** Rothwell, Leeds**SIZE** 1,600sq ft**TYPE** residential

We keep an eye on nearby stores' prices to stay competitive and ensure repeat business. There's no pricemarking in this category whatsoever, but I don't think it would make any difference if there was. Price always plays a smaller role in medicines as customers are looking for immediate relief. We try to keep a large range so that customers don't go elsewhere. Calpol is one of our best-selling brands, the majority of which are bought by parents for their children, followed closely by cough mixtures and Anadin.

RETAILER

4

NAME PAUL KEYS**STORE** Key News & Stores**LOCATION** Sheffield, South Yorkshire**SIZE** 500sq ft**TYPE** secondary road

We don't really have a pricing mechanism. If the product is slow moving and the supplier puts the price up, we'll keep it the same. The majority of OTC medicines are kept behind the counter, except for cough sweets, which go next to the confectionery aisle. I don't want to leave high risk products such as Nurofen exposed on the shop floor. Paracetamol is our best-selling product, but Lemsip Max is doing well at the moment because it's on offer at £2.49. Margins are typically around 30%, but some are quite high as I bought them on promotion. Calpol, for example, gives around a 43% margin, and Beechams 57%.

RETAILER

5

NAME RUSSELL HOLBORN**STORE** Holborn's**LOCATION** Earlswood, Surrey**SIZE** 1,900sq ft**TYPE** village

We tend to stick to the RRP set by Palmer & Harvey, and only occasionally adjust prices depending on how well something sells. We try and get in all the essentials including paracetamol, throat sweets, plasters, Nurofen and children's medicine. For some reason we don't have ibuprofen, and customers will always come in asking for it, but are generally happy to switch to Nurofen. Sales pick up significantly through winter, and we'll expand our range on certain lines such as Lemsip and Beechams, keeping a sharp eye out for promotions.

THE ENTREPRENEURS

The world's best business brains and what you can learn from them



CHARLIE BIGHAM

Route to the top

A far cry from our Weight Watcher's profile last week, Charlie Bigham is the name behind home-made convenience food that varies from pan-fried delicacies to hearty pies. After leaving the financial sector in 1996, Bigham soon realised he wanted to set up his own business and decided food was the best sector to be in. Focusing on healthy home-made ready meals, he played around with a few recipes and found some shops in London who agreed to stock them. It became apparent that the stores who stocked his products knew far more about food than he did, so when he wanted to expand he contacted them and they suggested he talk to Waitrose. After charming his way from the company's

central switchboard to a buyer, he managed to negotiate his stock into Waitrose, and from there he went to Harvey Nichols, Selfridges and London delis. For the first year, Bigham was able to fund his business from his savings. The first six months' revenue hit £60,000. Now he has more than 200 staff in North Acton and two production kitchens.

Key achievements

- Managing to get stock in Waitrose with a single cold-call.
- Going from supplying just three dishes to Waitrose to supplying 70 stores nationwide – growing by 2,300% overnight.
- Being chairman and creative director of a company that is growing at 19% per annum.

Lessons for your store

- 1 Do it now – Bigham did not procrastinate when he realised what he wanted to do.
- 2 Don't let money stop you from starting your own business – you just need to research which business sectors require less seed money.
- 3 Be bold – what have you got to lose from doing some of your own cold-calling?



RETAILER PROFILE



On the right track

With its live departure board for trains, two coffee machines and extensive selection of food to go, Lambs Larder is a perfect example of how retailers can make the most of local opportunities. Steven Lambert talks to owner Peter Lamb

If you've ever been waiting 15 minutes for a train from the railway station in Frant, East Sussex, you've more than likely paid a visit to Lambs Larder.

The convenience store and farm shop, run by Peter and Megan Lamb since 2010, has become a haven for busy commuters searching for a hot drink and quick bite to eat, as well offering an excellent range of local products and services for nearby residents.

"We do some things differently to other shops," says Peter. "For instance, we don't have prices on any of our products other than on a couple of lines and pricemarked goods.

"It may sound weird, and I can't see something like this working in Lewisham, for example, but we never have people questioning it when they come to the till. I think a lot of that comes down to the trust we've instilled in customers and knowing exactly what they want."

Paying close attention to shoppers' needs has enabled Peter and Megan to fine-tune their business and focus more on fast-selling profitable products and services.

This includes the store's two self-service coffee machines, which are frequently used by workers travelling to and from London and other locales.

"We have a live departure board for the

trains in the shop, and we were finding that people would often stop in to pick up a few things," Peter says.

"This led us to install a coffee machine but it became so popular that we had to add a second machine. We're now selling an average of 120 cups a day.

"We also offer a loyalty scheme like Costa, where shoppers can get their cards stamped and claim a free coffee. We have customers who pay £20 online for a pre-paid card, which means they can get cups of tea and coffee here for just £1."

Peter says he now hopes to grow this area of the business further by opening up into the garage at the back of the shop and creating a seating area for customers to enjoy a drink.

He adds that this would fit in perfectly with the store's free wi-fi access and large selection of food to go items.

"We get through so much food to go, everything from sausage rolls to pies, and we sell 50 to 60 sandwiches every day."

And Lambs Larder is also well-renowned as an excellent choice for locally-sourced products, working with more than 30 suppliers including Taywell Ice Cream and Korkers Sausages.

Peter says he has worked hard over the past few years to grow the profile of the store through radio advertising and social media.

"About a year and a half ago, we spent

‘One retailer we read about in RN put his staff in uniform, which inspired us to do the same. We have a lot of competition from multiples, so looking presentable and offering excellent customer service marks us out.’

Lambs Larder, Broomfield Road, Bells Yew Green, East Sussex



Peter and Megan Lamb have their own website for the shop and use social media extensively to encourage trade



“One of the most important things you can do as an independent retailer is listen to what your customers want”

£2,000 on a year's worth of radio advertising on KMFM. I was a bit dubious at first but soon after, our weekly take went up £2,000 and we had lots of customers coming in saying they had heard the ad. It's something we've continued ever since.

“We also have our own website and we're really active on social media. We have around 900 Facebook followers and 680 Twitter followers.

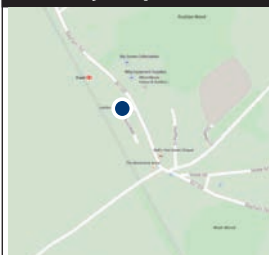
“Both pages are linked together, so any promotions or news we put on one will appear on the other.”

Peter and Megan are also looking ahead and have just agreed a deal with Bells Yew Green cricket club to open a satellite shop at their ground to serve players and fans over the summer.

Peter says they are also looking into acquiring a second store. “It's still early days but, if we did get a second store, the three main things we would like to replicate there would be coffee, ready meals and local produce.

“One of the most important things you can do as an independent retailer is listen to what your customers want. In the early days, we made the mistake of stocking products that we thought shoppers wanted, but we quickly learned that's not the way to go.” ●

Visit my shop



Lambs Larder,
36 Broomfield Road,
Bells Yew Green,
East Sussex
TN3 9AF

twitter
@lambslarder



**Want to see more
of Peter's store?**

betterRetailing.com

TRADING RESULTS



PA Photos

Strong results from House of Fraser, Poundstretcher and Waitrose this Christmas were good news for UK retail

Christmas is well and truly over and that means one thing to the retail sector: results. RN's overview of the key stories to emerge from the country's biggest retail names provides an opportunity to understand the state of the industry. **Tom Gockelen-Kozlowski** reports

Festive highs and lows

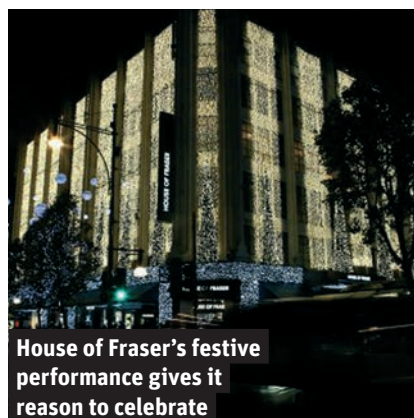


Sainsbury's

Like-for-like sales declined by 1.7% in the 14 weeks to 3 January despite the week before Christmas being a "record", with 29.5 million customer transactions. Sainsbury's chief executive Mike Coupe told BBC Radio 5 Live "broadly we sold the same amount of stuff last year, just at lower prices".

House of Fraser

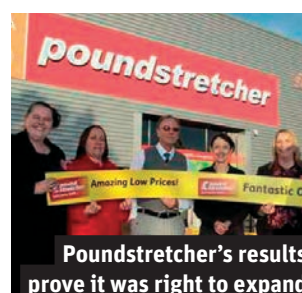
The department store declared itself "delighted" with a festive performance which saw like-for-like sales rise by 8% and online sales rise by over 30%. House of Fraser's Chinese owners have reportedly given the green light to investment worth £150m over four years to revamp its 59 stores and develop its online shopping service.



House of Fraser's festive performance gives it reason to celebrate

Majestic Wines

Although sales were up 3.7% for the 10 weeks to 5 January, profits fell as the company was forced into deep promotions by grocers and discounters. Chief executive Steve Lewis predicts the "competitive pricing environment" will continue throughout much of 2015, but adds that the increase in sales of bottles priced above £20 is a source of encouragement.



Poundstretcher's results prove it was right to expand

Poundstretcher

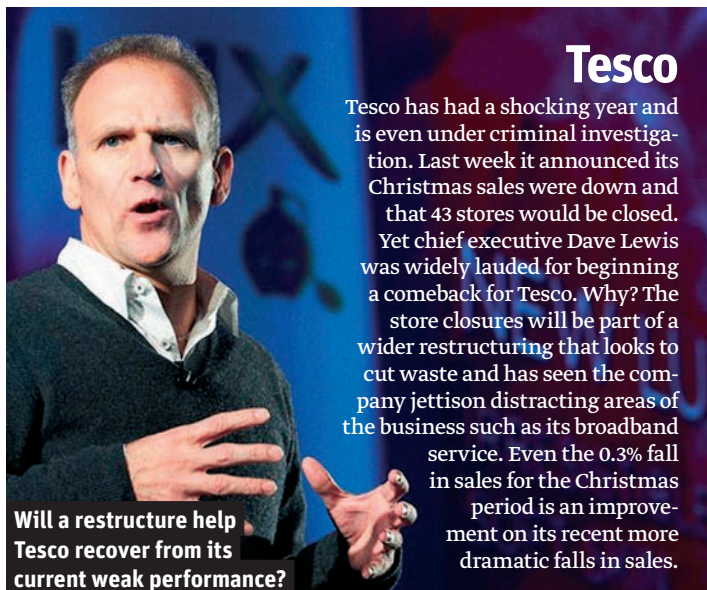
The value trend which is impacting convenience stores across the UK helped Poundstretcher increase its sales year on year by a massive 10% in the last five weeks of 2014. This translated into seven million shoppers, all hunting for small grocery items and stocking fillers and vindicating the chain's expansion to 409 stores.



High profile ads didn't save M&S from a "disastrous" Christmas

Marks & Spencer

While Marks & Spencer's food sales continued to rise (even if it was by a mere 0.1%) its fortunes are more often judged by its recent poor performance in women's clothes sales. By this measure, Christmas 2014 has been described by the Daily Telegraph as "disastrous". Non-food sales were down 5.8%, leading to the 14th consecutive quarter of declining total sales. The company had said it avoided pre-Christmas discounting to maintain margins but admitted that the quarter had been "difficult".



Tesco

Tesco has had a shocking year and is even under criminal investigation. Last week it announced its Christmas sales were down and that 43 stores would be closed. Yet chief executive Dave Lewis was widely lauded for beginning a comeback for Tesco. Why? The store closures will be part of a wider restructuring that looks to cut waste and has seen the company jettison distracting areas of the business such as its broadband service. Even the 0.3% fall in sales for the Christmas period is an improvement on its recent more dramatic falls in sales.

Will a restructure help Tesco recover from its current weak performance?

Waitrose

The upmarket supermarket achieved £728m in sales over the five weeks to 3 January, a 2.8% rise at existing stores as well as strong online performance. Mark Price, the company's managing director, said that the results showed the "effectiveness" of the strategy that will be built on in 2015 with the latest of a series of planned online-only hubs opening in the spring. ●

Waitrose's product innovation and service attracted new customers at Christmas

ANALYST'S VIEW

Verdict Retail's **Andy Stevens** looks at what the results released so far tell us about retail's performance at Christmas and what it spells for 2015.



Tesco has gained a largely positive response for its announcement, but I'm not of that view. Its results are a negative on what were an already very negative set of scores last year. In other words they're still getting worse but getting worse more slowly.

Far more positive was the rest of its announcement. Tesco needed to get across that action was taking place high up at the company. Its former boss Philip Clarke was never able to do this and his "Build a Better Tesco" strategy was never really defined.

Marks & Spencer's bad performance is about a whole other issue than just Christmas. Sales of womenswear have not been great for a couple of years now and this has previously been a really important driver of footfall. Food sales did go up but you'd expect that sales would have been raised a lot more than they were. It's the lack of footfall which is responsible for this.

Of the department stores, House of Fraser was rewarded for not invested in price matching, this has really helped build its sales and profits. John Lewis meanwhile has complained of the effects of Black Friday and it does seem that it has only served to bring forward Christmas spending and done so at lower prices.

Waitrose is always largely immune from the pressures on

the market and gets an easier ride than any of its competitors. This is because its customers are better off than any other and aren't going anywhere. What it is very good at Christmas is having the service and the product innovation which means more shoppers by into it who perhaps won't shop there at any other time of the year.

At the other end of the market Poundstretcher also did very well

because shoppers are realising that they don't have to pay a 15% to 20% premium to buy everyday essentials at their supermarket and can buy them at discounters instead. It also had a great range of smaller presents for customers. Its central locations mean that it benefits from a high footfall level too.

Yet it's Asda and its announcement about price cuts that really sets the scene for how the

big retailers will behave in 2015. The company, more than any other retailer aside from the discounters, is seen as a benchmark for value – not just by people in the industry but by customers too. This means that other grocers particularly are going to be forced to copy.

My advice to independent retailers this year is therefore to sell what you're good at. That's offering more convenience, longer opening hours and being a part of your neighbourhood. Never try to beat these guys on price unless you want to lose a lot of money.



Asda price cuts set the scene for how the big retailers will behave in 2015



Asda is seen as a benchmark for value

HEALTHIER SOFT DRINKS

As a fast-growing industry that has seen plenty of innovation, healthier soft drinks can be an incredibly difficult category for retailers to navigate and get right. But with many of your customers making 'healthy' New Year's resolutions, it's vital that you do get this category right. **Nadia Alexandrou** looks at how you can break down the barriers that may hold you back

Barriers are there to be broken

Healthier soft drinks should now comprise a key part of any CTN or convenience retailer's core range.

"Sugar free sales continue to grow at a phenomenal rate following the move within a number of consumer groups to eat and drink less sugar," says Boost's sales director Al Gunn. Despite this rise in demand, shifting a key category such as soft drinks can be an intimidating task.

Luckily Budgens of Broadstairs manager Adam Hogwood has faced many of these challenges before and has built up a tailored range for his community that any independent would be proud of.

If you've hit a soft drinks barrier, get inspired by Adam, the insight of key industry figures and make 2015 the year you see your profits from this key sub-sector soar.



Healthier choices: do you offer them?

Barrier #1

"It's safer to stick to just a few low-sugar or sugar-free brands that I know sell well in my store"

If you think that by stocking a few best-selling 'diet' lines like Diet Coke and Pepsi Max you are fulfilling the demand for healthier soft drinks, then you are missing out on a hugely dynamic and ever-expanding area of the market.



Greater choice means greater numbers of customers

Clear the way

Start trialling nationwide bestsellers

Diet Coke and Red Bull Sugarfree might have been favourites among health-conscious customers for years, but there's a good reason why major suppliers have invested heavily in recent years in widening their healthier soft drink ranges. In a fiercely competitive industry, these leading drinks manufacturers have done their homework and launches like Coca-Cola Zero, Coke Life and Red Bull Zero offer an even greater choice in a market that's becoming even more complex. "Currently, a significant proportion of growth within the soft drinks sector is coming from reduced or zero sugar products as consumers continue to look to brands

that offer increased choice," says CCE's trade communications manager Dave Turner. These products have since brought thousands of new customers and incremental sales to the market, so why not match the faith suppliers have put into their brands and bring them out in your store? Almost every major soft drinks manufacturer is innovating to offer more healthy options, for example independent-exclusive Boost reported huge success for its recently launched sugar free Pink Lemonade, of which total volume sales grew by 70%. In this context, it becomes impossible to rely on just a few perennial bestsellers to serve this area of the market.

Coconut water has established itself quickly in the market



Barrier #2 “New products are too risky”

While fast growth always means lots of product innovation, the emergence of new sectors such as coconut water and natural energy drinks, also means that many products launched will fail to crack the already-crowded market. This can leave little incentive to allocate space to them.

Clear the way Promotion, promotion, promotion

Suppliers are aware of the difficulties of introducing products to the market, especially in a dynamic sector such as soft drinks. One simple way to convince customers to try out a new flavour or brand is to use multibuy deals, according to soft drinks manufacturer CBL Drink's marketing director Maurice Newton, which “is an effective way of introducing consumers to new product categories.” Lucozade's marketing director Corrine Hopwood agrees, and suggests tailoring cross-category promotions to a product's target audience. For example, one of Lucozade's target audiences is males aged 25-35 on the lookout for on-the-go purchases and meal deals.

Engaging fully with this category

sub-sector and its key suppliers has enabled Adam to avoid any risks at all, however. “I use the empty end of an old chiller where I'll rotate new products and promotions, and actually leave it up to the suppliers to decorate and arrange it,” he says. Last year he started approaching suppliers and offering them this space to promote their products on a sale or return basis. By doing this, Adam successfully sold Vita Coco on promotion, as well as Ribena Strawberry when it first came out. “I also sit down with local suppliers and work on a promotion strategy, for example how to use social media as well as the promotional bay to drive awareness of that particular product,” says Adam.

Barrier #3 “Premium healthier soft drinks are too pricey”

Most areas are filled with tough competition including discounters, supermarkets and other independents. The fear of losing customers if prices are too premium can mean otherwise innovative, attractive and profit-driving products don't get stocked.

Clear the way

Find out which products your customers are willing to pay more for

Many customers will happily pay more for products if they have full confidence they provide good value and offer something unique. Adam's customers are willing to pay more for healthy drinks that are sourced locally, which is why he started stocking apple juice from Kent-based Little Stour Orchard. “I was genuinely surprised to see them selling well as soon they went onto the shelf, as they came in small glass bottles at a very premium price,” he says. Despite this, Adam now sells a couple of cases every week and credits part of its success to the growing popularity in craft drinks – much like in the beer market. Even mainstream suppliers

have picked up on this trend, and for example Halewood International – the UK's largest drinks manufacturer and distributor – sees major opportunities for its premium soft drinks brand John Crabbie's, which is free from artificial flavourings and includes a healthier Diet Cloudy Ginger Beer variant. “Crafted soft drinks allow retailers to offer customers to trade up from the standard soft drink, and Halewood International has deliberately chosen interesting and unusual flavours specifically targeted at adults that add sophistication as well as a premium element,” says the company director of marketing Richard Clark.

Natural, premium drinks will attract shoppers



Barrier #4 “There's no more room in my chiller”

Major suppliers drive so much activity that seeking out healthier brands and fitting them into an already huge range of products can seem difficult and even counter-productive.

Clear the way

Work with your suppliers

Problems with sugary soft drinks mean that major suppliers are also shifting toward more health-orientated variants, meaning the same level of support and insight can be expected, even as you shift your range towards healthier products. According to AG Barr's head of marketing Adrian Troy there's now “a huge demand for a product that delivers a full energy hit, but feels more natural and lighter than traditional energy drinks”. Consequently, the company launched Rockstar Energy Waters, which delivers the same caffeine content with 50% less sugar. CCE's Coca Cola

Life, which offers customers ‘a lower calorie cola with sweetness from natural sources’, highlights this same shift. The product has gained strong distribution levels since its launch in August, and is “expected to continue to make an impact in 2015,” says Mr Turner. Meanwhile new brands which do arrive, such as natural energy drink Little Miracles, are quickly growing a reputation for offering similar levels of support and market knowledge as more established brands. The drinks range offers a more natural alternative to caffeine – Ginseng – and contains fewer than 90 calories per bottle. ●



Suppliers' activity means shifting your range is a joint effort

To find out other ways the industry is responding to the sugar backlash go to:

betterRetailing.com

COOKING AT HOME **FRESH**

The future of convenience retail is fresh produce and every store can benefit.

Nadia Alexandrou speaks to three very different retailers to find out what they are doing to enable them to capitalise on the trend

Naturally profitable

For last week's retailer profile, RN spoke to east London Simply Fresh retailer Mehmet Guzel, who explained how last year he fully expected a quiet January in his Bethnal Green store, but was pleasantly surprised when his sales rose by £1,000. "I soon realised it was down to people keeping up New Year's resolutions and buying more fresh fruit and healthier products," he said. Bolstered by this success, Mehmet is now making plans to grow his fresh offering further this year, starting by expanding his fruit and vegetable range to around 50 products.

At the other end of the UK, Linda and Dennis Williams' Premier Broadway store is based in a less affluent

area in Edinburgh but is enjoying increasingly strong fruit and vegetable sales of £500 a week with margins between 30% and 100% after making a concerted effort with the category.

Finally, James White and his brother Ed, who run a large supermarket-style village store in Derbyshire – White's Calver – continue to channel investment into their fresh offer, and have just recently run a radio advertising campaign to communicate their fresh produce to customers.

How are these retailers, with very different stores and customers, growing their sales in this traditionally difficult to manage category? We decided to find out.



Fruit and vegetables at Mehmet Guzel's store

Benefit
Differentiates your store with high quality products and highlights your commitment to the local area



Linda and Dennis Williams hand pick their fresh produce

Benefit
Quality control and reduced wastage

TIP

Collect your own produce

Linda and Dennis Williams prefer to collect various pre-packaged fruit and vegetables directly from their wholesalers to ensure their customers get the best produce and to better manage their stock levels. The couple also offer a variety of more exotic, loose fruit and vegetables such as kiwis, ginger, spinach, green beans and butternut squash. They collect these items from Edinburgh's only fruit and veg depot – Total Produce – twice a week. "Collecting direct allows us to take a flexible 'little and often' approach that really helps to reduce the risk of wastage," says Linda.



Collecting direct allows us to take a flexible 'little and often' approach

TIP

Develop relationships with local suppliers

Ed and James White have worked towards established contacts with local suppliers over several years, including with Castlegate Farm, Chatsworth Brewery, Smyllies Fruit and Vegetables, Newclose Farmshop, Bloomers and Bakewell Pudding Shop. "This has dramatically increased the number of regulars, who appreciate that they are supporting their own community by shopping with us," says James.

TIP

Offer both loose and pre-packaged fruit

Make sure you cater to every demographic and customer need by offering a wide variety of different-sized formats as well as loose fruit and vegetables. This is what has helped Premier Broadway to encourage many customers, including families, single professionals and couples, to see a

healthier fresher diet as something which can be convenient as well as affordable. "For example, it's important that we offer both big bags of potatoes – chiefly for families – as well as loose potatoes for people catering for their own meals," says Linda.

Benefit
Attracts a wider customer base



Fresh produce offers a perfect welcome

Benefit

Significantly
reduces
wastage

TIP

Use smart merchandising to sell produce nearing its sell-by date

Like reducing wastage on any other product nearing its sell-by date, promotion and merchandising fresh produce is vital. This can be as simple as putting leftover bakery items by the till marked with brightly coloured discount stickers, or designating a reduced-price section in your chiller. Thanks to their in-store café – Palmer's – Ed and James White have found another way to drastically reduce wastage. Relocating all unsold fresh produce to the café "has been an extremely useful tactic for us, as customers are more likely to pick up a sweet item for a reduced price with their coffee than they would if the food was elsewhere in the store," says James.

Benefit

Helps make your
store a point of
destination

TIP

Shout about your range to customers

There's no point of going to the effort of investing in fresh if your customers aren't aware that you sell it. Ed and James ensure their customers are informed about their locally-sourced fresh range by advertising in newspapers, on the radio, and sending out leaflets. "We've just run a radio advert on Peak FM, and I've definitely noticed an uplift in sales as a result," says James. You can just as easily raise awareness of your selection in store by putting up posters in your window, your outdoor billboard or simply by word of mouth.

TIP

If you can, invest in a deli counter

If you are confident enough about local demand for fresh produce (and have the space), deli counters, once installed, hold huge potential for profit. Mehmet Guzel is an exemplary example of this, taking up to £2,500 a week from his counter alone. "We have a lot of people coming in to pick up fresh meat to use in sandwiches. And over Christmas, we had customers coming in buying large blocks of cheese," he told RN.

Have you got space for an in-store deli counter?

Benefit

Provides a specialist
point of difference
and drives
profit

TIP

Link up with your local gyms and health clubs

By identifying and understanding the type of customer most likely to buy fresh fruit and vegetables in his store, Mehmet has developed plans to reach out to local fitness centres to help drive his sales even further. "We're looking to send out leaflets to these establishments and offer people up to 15% extra points if they sign up for a loyalty card," he says. ●

Benefit

Targets the right
type of
customer

THREE WAYS THE INDUSTRY IS HELPING YOU DRIVE YOUR FRESH SALES

Suppliers driving incremental sales

Suppliers continue to take advantage of the growth in convenient cooking with increasingly innovative and gourmet ready-made sauces and condiments. Merchandised next to fresh produce such as poultry, retailers can easily drive incremental sales and offer customers the benefits of a fresh and quick meal for the evening. Mondelez's Philadelphia Simply Stir, for example, has been developed for "busy consumers", according to the company's trade communications manager Susan Nash. Similarly, Unilever has invested significantly into its condiments and dry packet sauce ranges to position their brands as a tasty accompaniment to evening meals, including the addition of four new flavours for its Knorr Flavour Pots range and re-designing Colman's condiments packaging with a 'Meals That Say It All' campaign.

Symbol groups lending a hand

Symbol groups are increasingly supporting retailers' fresh sections in response to changes in consumer demand. Spar, for example, has an ongoing initiative specifically geared around boosting sales of fresh fruit and vegetables. Its 'Fresh for Less' initiative, means retailers can offer customers a minimum of five items of fresh produce for £1 each or less. "Fresh is a key area of growth for Spar, as we know that it drives the most valuable mission in convenience stores – top-up shopping. The



initiative complements our 'mix and match' on meat and poultry products," says Spar's head of marketing Philippe Rondepierre. Similarly, sales of Nisa's fruit and vegetable range rose 17% after they were recently rebranded, with top sellers being Heritage bananas, Heritage Royal Gala apples and Heritage white grapes.

Government support is available

At a national government level, authorities are supporting retailers to help inspire shoppers to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. Scotland, for example, runs a programme that any retailer can volunteer to be part of, providing them with free eye-catching point of sale material to encourage shoppers to buy healthier food. The PoS can be provided for any product in store as long as it meets health criteria set down by the Scottish government.



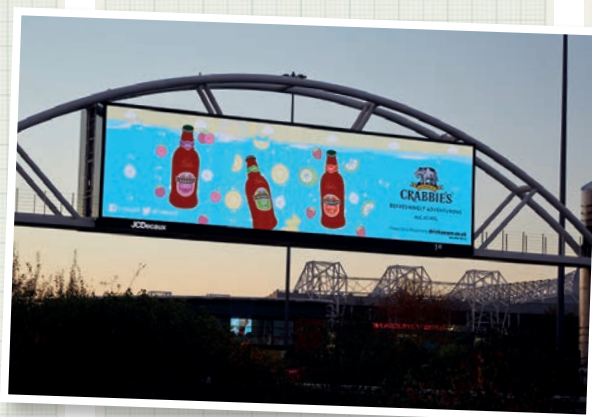
PREVIEW



Xtra sales opportunity

Limited edition Mars Xtra Choc bars are now available as single bars, 3-packs, 4-packs and 24-bar cases.

RRP 51p (single), £1.34 (3-pack), £1 (4-pack)
Outers 24
Contact 01753 550055



Here for ginger beer

Crabbe's Alcoholic Ginger Beer is being backed by a new marketing campaign that features radio and outdoor ads.

RRP various
Outers various
Contact 0845 6000 666



Two Natural additions

Nature Valley has launched two protein bars – Peanut & Chocolate and Peanut, Pumpkin & Sunflower Seeds.

RRP 69p (single) £2.89 (box)
Outers not given
Contact 01895 201 367



Superstar gum support

Wrigley has recruited Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher to star in a TV ad campaign for Extra.

RRP various
Outers various
Contact 01752 752094



Makes good scents

Febreze's new Spring Collection includes Freesia Bloom, Vanilla Flower and Lotus Verbena scents.

RRP various, from £2.99
Outers various
Contact 0800 597 3388



Here's to the New Year

To coincide with Chinese New Year next month, limited edition packs of Tsingtao are now available.

RRP various
Outers various
Contact 0845 6000 666



Fingers worth pointing to

Nestlé has launched two KitKat variants – Toffee Treat and a permanent two finger 8-pack.

RRP 58p - £1.59

Outers various

Contact 01904 604 604



Total coverage assured

TV ads for Total Greek Yogurt will run until 17 February. They are part of a wider campaign to promote the brand.

RRP £1 - £2.39

Outers 6

Contact 0207 824 9933



Putting you in the pictures

Dairylea is launching an on-pack promotion this month offering the chance to win Vue family 3D cinema passes.

RRP £2.28

Outers not given

Contact 0870 600 0699



These biscuits are Tops

A £2m ad campaign will support Mondelez's new Belvita Tops – biscuits topped with chocolate or fruit.

RRP £2.79

Outers not given

Contact 0870 600 0699



Deli-Choc delights

New from United Biscuits is McVitie's Deli-Choc – Belgian chocolate-coated biscuits in milk, dark and white chocolate variants.

RRP £1.75 - £1.99

Outers 6 - 12

Contact 0800 138 0813



Clear profits available

Reckitt Benckiser has launch a new range of Clearasil Ultra 5 in 1 products including an exfoliating scrub and cleansing pads.

RRP £5.99

Outers not given

Contact 01509 632871

THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES

email nicola.stewart@newtrade.co.uk
tel 020 7689 3358



Judge for yourself

NOBODY IS BETTER READ THAN DREDD

He's been maintaining law and order for 38 years, now fans of the comic superhero can get their hands on the ultimate collection

THIS NEW COLLECTION from Hachette compiles the definitive Judge Dredd stories from the past 38 years, written and illustrated by some of the top talents in the comics industry. Judge Dredd: The Mega Collection forms a best-of package that spans the breadth of the future lawman's career, from his earliest cases to his most recent epic adventures. With stories selected thematically to give unique insights into every facet of Mega-City life and beyond, this collection is the widest-ranging of the Dredd universe to date. The launch of the 80-part series is to be supported by a TV advertising campaign and with an ongoing cover price of £9.99, it will deliver strong profits.



**JUDGE DREDD: THE
MEGA COLLECTION**

On sale 21 January
Frequency fortnightly
Price issue one £1.99,
issue two £6.99, issue
three onward £9.99
Distributor
Marketforce
Display with other
partworks

Round up



NICOLA STEWART
Magazines
reporter

DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

I recently read a newspaper article about a new shop in Brighton that sells independent magazines exclusively.

The owner of the store, which stocks about 200 titles at any one time, was quoted as saying "our mantra is if it's available at WH Smith we do not sell it".

I thought it was an interesting line and one that I am increasingly hearing from independent newsagents who want to set themselves apart from the multiples.

More retailers are turning away from the top 100 bestsellers and focusing on niche markets that cater to their individual customers.

I have spoken to RN readers who stock more than 25 titles on a single subject based on the knowledge of what is popular in their area. These retailers are matching sales of their boat, railway or fishing titles with the likes of Hello! and the Radio Times.

For the most part, it is as simple as taking an interest in what their customers are spending time – and money – on. It isn't about packing as many titles as possible onto the newsstand, it is about making a concerted effort to tailor your range.

Is there a vintage tractor club in your town? Is there a university that specialises in architecture and design in your city? The more you know about your customers and your area, the more you can establish yourself as a destination for specialist titles.

It isn't something that will work for everyone but for those who want to take it a step further, there is plenty of opportunity.



BETTER TOGETHER!

Please display Yours Puzzles with Yours

Yours Puzzles — on sale 20th January!



THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES



BLACK + WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

February's issue of Black + White Photography comes with a free Photography Holidays & Courses guide, offering a wide range of workshops for people wanting to develop their skills in the UK and abroad. The title is dedicated to black and white images and photographers and features contemporary shots from some of the finest names in the industry. This issue features work from around the world by photographer Marc Riboud.



On sale 22 January
Frequency monthly
Price £4.50
Distributor Seymour
Display with Amateur Photography, Outdoor Photography



On sale 16 January
Frequency bimonthly
Price £7.95
Distributor Seymour
Display with Aeroplane Monthly



AEROPLANE ICONS

This issue of Aeroplane Icons is dedicated to the popular F-4 Phantom aircraft. The Phantom is a fighter bomber originally developed for the US Navy. It entered service in 1960 and was soon adopted by the US Marine Corps and the US Air Force. It was used extensively in the Vietnam War and was the last US fighter to attain ace status in the 20th century.



On sale 15 January
Frequency monthly
Price £4.95
Distributor Comag
Display with Guitar Magazine, Acoustic Guitar



ACOUSTIC

The February issue of Acoustic magazine comes covermounted with the exclusive new Acoustic Presents CD. The CD features a selection of the best new music around, chosen by the team behind the magazine. Artists include RJ Thompson, Alexander Wolfe, Fred's House, Jamie Beau and Pete Webber. This issue should be displayed prominently in the music section.



On sale 20 January
Frequency weekly
Price £1.50
Distributor Frontline
Display with Heat, Grazia



CLOSER

The four January issues of Closer come with weekly diet and fitness plans, as well as free gym passes for every customer. This comes in addition to its usual mix of celebrity news and publisher Bauer is expecting a lift in sales and increased interest from customers outside the usual readership. It is advising retailers to display the issue full-facing at the front of the newsstand.



On sale 21 January
Frequency bimonthly
Price £3.95
Distributor Marketforce
Display with other business and finance titles



THE FRANCHISE MAGAZINE

At the start of 2015, retailers are perhaps refocusing and re-evaluating their businesses. Franchising offers retailers the strength of an established brand name along with the associated greater buying power. More than 100,000 people have already expressed interest in obtaining a franchise between now and the end of 2015, so sales of The Franchise Magazine are expected to be strong.



Bestsellers News & current affairs

Title	On sale date	In stock
1 New Scientist	22.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Private Eye	21.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 The Economist	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Weekly News	21.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 National Geographic	28.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 BBC Focus	05.02	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Spectator	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 The Week	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 All About History	05.02	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 BBC History	29.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Investors Chronicle	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 New Statesman	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 How It Works	05.02	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 History Revealed	02.02	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 Wonderpedia	29.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 Monocle	22.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 Time	23.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 BBC Sky at Night	22.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 National Geographic Special	28.01	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 New Scientist The Collection	22.01	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data supplied by Menzies Distribution

Disney
BIG HERO 6

**BRAND NEW
STICKER
COLLECTION**

**STARTER PACK:
£2.99**
**Sticker Packet:
50p**

**OUT
SOON**

© Disney

PANINI
www.paninigroup.com

THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES



FOREVER SPORTS

This issue of Forever Sports features an interview with the world number one-ranked tennis player, Novak Djokovic. The cover star has won seven Grand Slam singles titles and held the number one ranking for a total of 129 weeks. The issue also includes articles on what women really want in the bedroom, how to master social media, underwater rugby and tips from Chelsea footballer Cesc Fabregas on how to play centre mid.



On sale 20 January
Frequency monthly
Price £2
Distributor Frontline
Display with Men's Health



TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT (TES)

TES magazine will be publishing additional content for its 16 and 23 January issues, presenting an opportunity to increase sales. The respective issues will come with additional supplements covering computing and first jobs. To ensure the most is made from this additional value, Seymour plans to adjust supplies where necessary. TES has been the world's leading publication for teachers for more than 100 years.



On sale 16 January
Frequency weekly
Price £1.90
Distributor Seymour
Display with newspapers



FUN TO LEARN FRIENDS

The New Year's special issue of Fun To Learn Friends comes covermounted with a free Peppa Pig chip-and-pin shop set. The issue includes a 24-page workbook with Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom stickers, new activities from the Gruffalo, Mike the Knight, Dora the Explorer and Sooty, and an exclusive competition with Mickey Mouse.



On sale 15 January
Frequency monthly
Price £2.35
Distributor Comag
Display with Fun to Learn
Peppa Pig, Milkshake!



TAKE A CROSSWORD

The first issue of Take a Break's Take a Crossword for 2015 is a strong one, with more than 70 puzzles and a treasure-trove of competitions for readers. The issue, which is under new editor Ailsa Bryce, features more than £5,000 in prizes, plus an exclusive reader offer towards treatments at Whittlebury Hotel and Spa. Take a Crossword is one of the best-selling puzzle magazines on the newsstand.



On sale 15 January
Frequency monthly
Price £2.10
Distributor Frontline
Display with Puzzler
Crossword, TAB Take A
Puzzle



DESTINATION WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS ABROAD

Destination Weddings & Honeymoons Abroad is launching in response to the soaring demand from couples who are jetting off to marry overseas. The title will cover wedding and honeymoon destinations, fashion, accessories, beauty and anything else brides need to know about tying the knot abroad.



On sale 15 January
Frequency bimonthly
Price £4.95
Distributor Seymour
Display with Brides,
Perfect Wedding

Industry viewpoint Elise Wells

Editor and publisher,
Slimming World



Specialist slimming magazines are a vital source of weight-loss advice and motivation, and never more so than in January.

It's estimated that around seven million people will have made New Year's resolutions to improve their health and losing weight is one of the most popular pledges. Around this time it's likely that some of those people – even the most committed to their goals – might be looking for a little inspiration to help them stay on track with their new healthy regime.

There is still time to capitalise on this peak period for weight-loss resolutions and slimming magazines in store.

As a market leader, Slimming World is well-placed to do just that. It continues to outperform the women's interests sector and is now the fifth largest actively-purchased title in the UK.

The first issue of 2015 – on sale until 12 February – shows the title isn't putting the brakes on its mission to help readers slim down and shape up in 2015.

The issue features 10 real-life success stories from slimmers who have lost more than 65st between them, more than 40 pages of healthy recipes, and emotional and psychological features to motivate readers.

This new year special includes a cover-mounted free mini-magazine containing 28 recipes for lighter takes on pub-grub classics from steak and Guinness pies to cheesy chips.

To get the most of the title, make sure you have plenty of stock available and make a prominent display of it. Additional displays at the front of the store or near the till work well, too. Be sure that magazines are also in their usual display spot, so your regular readers don't miss them.

While it attracts a largely female readership, Slimming World magazine's October 2014 issue saw the launch of men's section 'M' in recognition of the growing number of males looking for healthy weight-loss advice, so it's worth thinking about including it alongside some men's health titles in your displays, too.



DON'T MISS IN NEXT WEEK'S RETAIL NEWSAGENT

JULIAN TAYLOR-GREEN ON THE £160k REFIT THAT TRANSFORMED HIS STORE

Plus, John Eastwood investigates which scratchcards are driving your profits and Stuart Kimber explains how the iViewer app can help partially-sighted customers



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IN ASSOCIATION WITH

betterRetailing.com

**Extra!
Extra!**

Back in the day

100

YEARS AGO
16 January 1915



There is a great deal of complaint among retailers in the north and the Midlands about the attitude of local newspaper publishers to their accounts. Before the war, it was customary to collect accounts monthly, but some publishers now appear to believe that accounts should be paid when papers are delivered.

50

YEARS AGO
16 January 1965



While 1964 newspaper circulation figures show "hurtful losses", the Guardian attained a daily average sale of 277,599 copies during the half year from July to December. The Daily figure for the Telegraph was 1,332,855, an increase of 29,603 copies.

25

YEARS AGO
20 January 1990



A proposal to ban tobacco advertising as we know it and move to the system used in Ireland, where only a shot of the pack front alongside a government health warning is shown, will be voted on by the European Parliament in March and seems likely to pass.

Carrot and stick can't defeat goose-ing goat

Extra Extra! readers are probably all too familiar with dealing with problem customers, but how many can say they've had to tackle a bottom-biting billy goat?

The staff at Budgens, Arbury Road, in Cambridge can. After escaping from its owner's garden, a goat headed straight for their store and staff had to take swift action to bar it from the premises.

But goats, it appears, get angry when banned from their favourite shops and this one refused to be mollified by an offer of free carrots.



"One of the staff members and another duty manager were trying to get it away with a carrot. But it kept attacking people. She was given a little nip on

the bottom," duty manager Jo Hilton told Cambridge News.

Staff report that the problem goat is a serial offender, and has visited the store before, when again, it attacked a staff member's bottom.

Extra Extra! would like to know what the goat is so desperate to buy from the store. Porridge Goats? Sugar Gruffs? Kid's confectionery?

Lidl's bargain Burns Night

If you are a proud Scot with your own authentic and historic family tartan, look away now.

Because discount chain Lidl has announced it is launching a budget range of "Scottish highland-wear" lines in advance of Burns Night on 25 January.

Revellers who don't want to shell out for the genuine articles can pay £29.99 for two designs of kilts, £11.99 for a ghillie shirt, £3.99 for socks and £9.99 for a leather



sporran.

And if any parents you know upset you over Christmas, why not get revenge by treating their offspring to a set of "Kids' Playable Bagpipes" for just

£12.99?

Extra Extra!'s question is, will Lidl be promoting affordable underwear to go alongside its Scottish wares, or will the absence of these add-on lines answer the age-old question of what really is worn underneath kilts?

Round up



AROUND WITH THE ROUNDSMAN

with **Blanche Fairbrother**

It is no wonder our lives whizz past at such a rate – they are being pushed forward all the time.

We were getting Easter shoved under our noses well before we had even got to Christmas, and on Saturday 3 January when I went past a place on my round called The Swan at Forton there was a huge board outside telling people to book now for Valentine's Day on one side and to book now for Mother's Day on 15 March on the other. I think it is all too much too soon and it would be nice if we could just slow things down and let these special times come along at their own pace.



On Thursday 8 January I saw one of the first signs that spring isn't very far away. There in the garden at Sutton was a delightful cluster of snowdrops all out in flower. They certainly brightened up what was otherwise a dark and dismal morning.

The wretched Telegraph has soon got back to being its usual obnoxious size on Saturdays. It was so much easier to deal with when the Weekend and Travel sections were merged into one over the Christmas and New Year period. Even the customers were saying how much better it was with less in it. I just wish the publisher could see that too.

Just having read Doug's New Year resolutions I can't help thinking that he has set himself a high target, but I do wish him well with them all. I gave up making resolutions years ago because they always seemed to fall by the wayside and become "that would have been a good idea" thoughts by the middle of January.

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