

RN



RN in America

How this Pennsylvania-based forecourt became a leader in made-to-order food

STORE TOUR (PART 1 OF 5)

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RN
EXCLUSIVE

How to spend £13,636 on your shop

- Top UK independent retailers share 2019 investment plans
- Lenders reveal why indies are asking for bigger loans

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RN

Shaping the future
of independent retail
since 1889



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WELCOME



Editor - news

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When we asked shop owners this week what they would do with nearly £14,000, their answers put mine to shame. While my response involved flip flops, sangria and a flight, theirs revealed a glut of great ideas for other shop owners to follow, the best of which you can discover on page 18.

One retailer this week said store investment sits in a paradox, where upgrading your store has become increasingly necessary, but also more difficult to sign off on. He said this is because strong, well-financed com-

petition from multiples means the level and frequency of investment required to stay ahead is higher; this same level of competition also means the risk of poor ROI is higher.

I'm sure the hundreds of readers who entered coffee machine contracts requiring a certain level of use, only for a nearby multiple to install one, can appreciate this.

While it's important to always weigh the risks, there's a danger of the industry becoming damagingly risk-averse, and I suspect the ACS's £13,636 average symbol store annual investment level could be skewed by big spenders, meaning many are probably investing nothing at all.

I asked another shop owner about the fear of investments failing and he answered: "Instead of asking 'what if it doesn't work?', shopkeepers should be asking themselves 'what if it does work?'" It's an outlook that he said helps him see opportunities, rather than just risks.

The many valid reasons not to invest include selling up, having a difficult year's trading, banks being unwilling to lend to SMEs and, crucially, needing to put a healthy amount of profit in your own pocket.

However, many stores would benefit from having more money invested in them, even if there are barriers to doing so. This is why it's our focus this week, to break the paradox by giving strong ideas from successful retailers just like you.

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BREAKING NEWS

Shops need help with plastic ban

Retailers have urged the government to help small businesses with extra costs incurred after a clampdown on plastic straws and stirrers.

The news comes after environment secretary Michael Gove revealed he has already started a six-week consultation to ban single-use plastics.

Trudy Davies, owner of independent store Woosnam & Davies in Wales, said a partnership between manufacturers, government and retailers is vital.

"We want to be on board with this, but the government must give us an incentive," she said. "This will have an impact on us, but if manufacturers are able to work with us and give us an alternative for the same price that would really help."

Gove said the ban could be introduced as early as next year.

Alcosynths are coming

Alcohol replacements known as 'alcosynths' could recreate the short-term effects of drinking, without hangovers and longer-term health issues.

Fran Willhelm, a senior business development manager at research consultant Ayming, said: "The goal is for alcosynths to be thought of in the same way as sugar or tobacco alternatives."

"It's becoming more credible alcosynth could be a major distributor in the beverage market."

Professor David Nutt, chief scientific officer at developer Alcarelle, predicts alcosynth products will become available to shop owners to stock in "three to five years".

Autumn Budget boon for indies 'If the high streets are to remain, they need to adapt'

Business rates for smaller stores slashed by a third

by Alex Yau

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Independent retailers with rateable values of £51,000 or under will see their business rates bill cut by a third as part of the Autumn Budget.

Chancellor Philip Hammond said the changes will take effect from April 2019 until the next business rates revaluation in 2021.

According to Hammond, the changes will represent an average saving of £8,000 per property. "High streets are under pressure

as Britain adapts to online shopping," he said. "If the high streets are to remain, they need to adapt and we are supporting them in doing so."

"We're providing funding to help councils transform their high streets, while we're going to help small businesses with the high fixed costs of business rates."

In response, NFRN president Mike Mitchelson told RN: "The chancellor has been listening to retailers on business rates, which are a huge problem. We would have liked to see

a 100% rates relief for small businesses, however."

A £675m 'Future High Streets Fund' will also be introduced to help councils improve high streets.

The fund is designed to help increase public access to high streets, reduce congestion and support the conversion of disused retail spaces into residential areas.

National living wage for full-time workers will also rise from £7.83 to £8.21 per hour in April, equalling a £690 annual increase per employee.

Other announcements

included a consultation to tax manufacturers who produce single-use plastic packaging that contains less than 30% recycled material from April 2022.

Duty on beer, cider, spirits and fuel are frozen. However, duty on tobacco will rise by 2% above inflation, which will add 33p to some packs of cigarettes and 48p to some 30g pouches of rolling tobacco.

Mitchelson added: "The tobacco duty rise could lead to an increase in illicit trade, and the government must increase its level of enforcement alongside it."



Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the Scottish National Party

Fund for Scottish retailers extended

The Scottish government will extend its food-to-go capital investment fund by £300,000, first minister Nicola Sturgeon has announced.

Speaking at the Scottish Grocers Federation's centenary conference last week, she said the money would "help grocers to provide people with access

to good quality, locally sourced and healthy food".

She added: "A diverse and successful convenience store sector is vital in serving communities throughout Scotland. Last year's food-to-go fund was very effective in supporting small retailers the length and breadth of the country, to entice custom-

ers into their stores and generate a new income stream for grocers."

When the fund first ran in 2017, it put £250,000 aside for retailers who wished to develop a food-to-go station, and offered to match 50% of the upfront costs.

The new fund more than doubles this, and

includes £50,000 from Zero Waste Scotland.

Sturgeon commended the SGF, thanking it for its work searching for the most retail-friendly deposit return scheme system for Scotland.

"The findings of the study will inform the shaping of the policy," she said.

BREAKING NEWS

PayPoint: £50 for referrals

Retailers who refer another retailer to adopt a PayPoint One terminal will receive up to £50 credit for themselves and for the store owner they nominate.

The 'refer a retailer' promotion runs throughout this month; retailers can receive the reward for each device a referred store has installed.

PayPoint's commercial director, Lewis Alcraft, said: "I'm pleased this offer will reward our existing retail partners, while welcoming many more."

To participate, retailers must complete an online form, confirming details such as store name, post-code and contact telephone number. Retailers are not limited to the number of friends they can refer.

CCTV spec is key to safer shops

CCTV that meets police security standards will reduce the frequency and damage caused by retail crime.

Previous research by RN showed that shoplifters who target independent grocery stores are four times less likely to be arrested.

Experts said the quality of crime prevention factors is partly behind this disparity.

Axis Communications recently achieved the police's Secured by Design status, guaranteeing the quality of its products.

The company's retail segment lead, Graham Swallow, told RN that properties are up to 75% less likely to be burgled if their security measures meet the police's Secured by Design standards.

Indies seek funds for food equipment Average finance request doubles in one year

Loan applications soar as shops invest in food to go

EXCLUSIVE

by Alex Yau

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Retailers are increasing the amount of funds they are borrowing to improve their food-to-go ranges.

Alex Afek, managing director of finance provider Got Capital, told RN the average amount retailers are now applying for has doubled to £10,000. "The average value of finance applications last year was £5,000, but retailers now require more staff or have to expand to accommodate trends such as hot food," he said.

"Independent retailers are looking to buy equipment such as fridges, or to refurbish their stores to cope with products that attract more footfall."

In comparison, 15% of Century Business Finance's loan applications from retailers this year were to improve food to go, compared to 5% in 2017.

Managing director Ben Larkins said: "The average funding for food to go remains at £20,000 to £30,000. However, more retailers are looking to put hot food concessions into their stores or re-

place fixtures in order to keep up appearances.

"They're branching out into areas we had never previously seen in convenience stores."

Seelan Thambirajah, of Premier Gostwick Road in Bedford, invested £5,000 in food to go when he refurbished his store in April. He told RN: "Last year, I spent £1,500, but I wanted to add equipment such as coffee, slush and hot dog machines this year.

"It was worth it, because my food-to-go margins increased by 5% and sales rose by 15% in 12 weeks."

The increase follows the ACS's recent Local Shop Report, which says retailers spend just over £13,630 every year on store improvements.

ACS chief executive James Lowman said: "These figures show retailers are looking at substantial investment in this area.

"However, only 7% of funds come from banks, credit unions and other asset financing."

● See how seven leading retailers would invest £13,636 in their stores on page 18

New software stamps out staff theft

The Myda Cloud digital toolkit is helping independent shop owners stamp out staff theft.

The free software works with smartphones and EPOS systems to send notifications on trends across stock levels, sales and till activity.

The company is already in place in selected Spar

and Londis stores in the UK. Discussing one of the benefits for shopkeepers, company founder Senthuran Sampanthar told RN: "The software can notify you of unusual behaviour by staff. For example, when one employee's till revenues are out of line with what should be expected."

Asked for an example, Sampanthar responded: "A shop staff member was selling coffee but not putting it through the till. He was even using his own cups so that the number the stores used in the day levelled with the sales data.

"Our software identified the discrepancy and

led to the scheme being discovered when it had gone unnoticed."

Myda Cloud also enables stores to launch loyalty programmes, connect in-store offers to online promotions and track customer buying habits.

● To receive Myda Cloud for free, call RN on 020 7689 3371

Retailer takes the plunge to raise money for prostate cancer

Scottish retailer Asif Akhtar's bungee jump to raise awareness of prostate cancer led to a customer getting an early diagnosis and a better chance of survival. Akhtar screened the video of his jump in store alongside statistics showing the extent of the disease among men in the UK. The move prompted the customer to get himself checked. "He's been told he has an 85% chance of survival due to catching it early. Even if it's saved just one life, it's been worth it," Akhtar said.



SYMBOL NEWS

KeyStore shops get tech boost

KeyStore retailers are to receive more up-to-date information on EPOS data, new products and PoS when they receive visits from the Scottish symbol group's business development managers.

All the managers will be equipped with devices by the end of 2018, which will enable them to process orders, spot gaps in sales and show plans from suppliers while in a store. Retailers will also be able to access KeyStore-branded displays to customise their store's social media pages from one website.

KeyStore retail sales director Craig Brown told RN: "Retailers are already leading busy lives throughout their day and we're investing in new hardware to help make their businesses drive profitable growth and run more efficiently."

Proof to double up in c-stores

Alcohol distributor Proof Drinks is aiming to double its presence in convenience next year through new partnerships with retailers and wholesalers.

The company currently distributes its brands in 1,500 Co-op and Premier stores. Shops under the new partnerships will gain access to new products from the Pistonhead craft lager range.

Managing director Jeremy Hill said: "We are looking at more independent convenience stores because they're taking interesting approaches to craft alcohol. From merchandising to ranging, retailers are doing lots of exciting things."



New Co-op chain to focus on food to go

Co-op is rolling out a concept chain focusing on the food-to-go trend across the country over the next year. The first 'On the go' store was opened outside Manchester Piccadilly Station this month. It includes vegetarian and vegan ranges, alongside self-checkouts and a refillable water station. Two London openings are planned for 2019. Co-op's northern divisional managing director, Derek Furnival, said: "Located in areas with high levels of footfall, these stores will serve time-poor shoppers that need to make quick purchases with ease."

Mixed results for Shopper First 'It didn't work as well as expected,' says rural shop owner

Costcutter refurb success depends on demographics

by Alex Yau

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The standout success promised by Costcutter's Shopper First programme is limited to stores with certain demographics, say retailers who have refurbished their stores under the plan.

The scheme tailors a store's appearance and range based on the age and buying habits of five customer profiles.

Boston retailer Suenita Keshwara invested £150,000 in refitting her store under Shopper First a year ago.

"The majority of my customers are shoppers aged between 65 and 80," she told RN.

"As part of the refit, I added a coffee machine and contactless payment technology to appeal to a much younger crowd."

"It didn't work as well as expected, however. This is a rural area, where customers don't like change, and young people living here aren't as receptive to the latest trends as those in the city. They don't have the same income."

In comparison, York retailer Mike Nicholls has seen chilled sales at his Costcutter grow 20% since joining Shopper First last month. "The store is based in a busy urban area, and our refit was tailored to catering for families and rural residents."

"We're offering a 'Meal for Tonight' at the front of the shop where customers can get a meat, a carbohydrate and a sauce for £5."

"Alcohol sales have also grown by 20% and we have added a television, which

makes customers aware of the latest promotions."

The comments followed Costcutter marketing director Sean Russell unveiling upcoming changes to Shopper First in September. Factors such as store location, shop size and the income of customers will be considered in the update next year.

Russell also pledged the programme will help retailers reach double-digit growth as Costcutter aims to have all 1,776 of its stores join by 2021.

Track and trace will delay wholesale deliveries

The time taken for retailers to receive wholesale deliveries will increase when new track and trace regulations to combat illicit tobacco are introduced.

From 20 May, tobacco packaging will require unique codes that must be scanned by wholesalers when the products enter

and exit warehouses, and at the point they reach a retailer. However, Scottish Wholesale Association chief executive Colin Smith told RN the process will delay deliveries.

"Based on my experience of how long it takes to collate and process orders in wholesale, track and

trace will be onerous," he said. "The process of scanning each tobacco outer will add up to three minutes to each delivery. Multiply this over a week across multiple depots and you're looking at more hours and manpower."

DeeBee Wholesale's trading director, Andy

Morrison, said the regulation will add time to a wholesaler's workload if a separate scanner is required to process orders.

Smith and Morrison said suppliers and HMRC have provided little information on the required software and hardware to track and trace orders.

STORE TOUR



Making fuel fit for the future

It takes risk and vision to grow from one convenience store in 1952 to nearly 600 forecourts across six US states. **Chris Dillon** speaks to Dan Coffin and Ryan Sheetz to find out how they are making sure their fuel business has a secure future

Sheetz gas stations are a familiar sight for truckers driving across the rust belt of America. Its bold, red logo beams from the side of roads from Pennsylvania to Ohio, attracting more than 1.5 million customers every day.

But despite its scale, Sheetz remains a family business with Ryan Sheetz (pictured right) as assistant vice president of brand strategies and his cousin Joseph Sheetz as CEO. The company's roots date back more than 100 years to Ryan's great, great grandfather, JD Harshbarger, who set up Harshbarger Dairy. The business opened a number of grocery stores in dense neighbourhoods, called dairyyettes, until Ryan's uncle, Bob Sheetz, convinced the family to let him experiment at one. In 1952, he bought the store for \$900 and turned it into the Sheetz Kwik Shopper. In the 1970s, the business began selling fuel and Sheetz became famous as a gas station.

"Our profits relied on gasoline and tobacco, but we saw the writing was on the wall. Demand was only going to decrease, and regulation was only going to intensify. If we wanted to be around for another 50 years, we had to invest in something else, and foodservice is that bright, shiny object," Ryan explains.

At the start of the 21st century, Sheetz rolled out a store model it called 'the conven-

ience restaurant'. These stores came with a seating area, made-to-order food, specialist coffee and bigger bathrooms. The most striking change was the decision to site the fuel pumps around the back of the building.

"The biggest hurdle we have to selling food is our gas pumps. People assume that there's no way a gas station could sell fresh, quality, prepared food. We're always looking to overcompensate for that," Ryan says.

Sheetz' mission statement is simple and brilliant. It is to 'be the business that will put Sheetz as we know it today out of business'.

This mantra keeps the company grounded in innovation and always looking at what the future of fuel retailing looks like.

It is this thinking that got them into foodservice and, more recently, established an early partnership with Tesla, becoming the largest operator of Tesla chargers in the country to better understand the growth of electric vehicles.

AVP of culinary development at Sheetz Dan Coffin (pictured left) says: "When I started at Sheetz, we did not really have a food culture. Then we started by setting a target to get \$50,000 (£39,000) a week in food and beverage sales per store and that made a huge difference to the culture.

"We began staffing differently. Before that, we were hiring convenience store

If we wanted to be around for another 50 years, we had to invest in foodservice **RYAN SHEETZ**



Inside my shop

- 1 Dan Coffin and Ryan Sheetz oversee the marketing and food strategy for Sheetz
- 2 Sheetz' Made to Go range includes healthier snacking products, such as wraps and salads, and is located at the front of the store
- 3 Sheetz Brothers Coffee is one of the company's best-selling products, available to order and from self-serve machines

INFORMATION

Location

Altoona, Pennsylvania
United States

Opening hours

24/7

No. of stores

585 stores

Staff

19,000 employees

Open since

1952



STORE TOUR



4



5

Inside my shop

- ④ Recent changes in alcohol laws means c-stores can now sell beer and cide – Sheetz has introduced a refrigerated beer cave
- ⑤ The business avoids franchising with other companies, preferring to build its own brand on lines such as doughnuts
- ⑥ The centre of Sheetz' food offer is Made to Order, which is available to order on in-store tablets and via a mobile app

managers, after we began hiring from quick service restaurants and casual dining.”

Sheetz' foodservice offer comes under three sub-brands: Made to Order, Made to Go and Sheetz Brothers Coffee. Made to Go contains its pre-prepared chilled food, such as sandwiches, wraps and cheese snack bars with Made to Order offering customers a wider choice.

Made to Order was introduced in 1986 and can be bought by customers with touch-screens in stores. The screens offer dozens of food options such as appetisers, burgers, salads, wraps, subs, burritos, tortillas, pizzas, nachos and hot dogs, which can be completely customised with a number of toppings and fillings. Food is then assembled in an in-store kitchen and is ready to go within 15 minutes. Sheetz Brothers Coffee can either be ordered or can be purchased with self-serve machines. These three brands represent 30% of the company's revenue with a higher profit share.

“We grew into these brands over time. The easiest solution is to partner up with a franchise, like a Dunkin' Donuts. We tried that and it didn't work for us. We are control freaks. We subscribe to the thought that no one can do it better than us,” says Ryan. ●



6



Get the full insight behind Sheetz' mobile app, investment in food and employment practices at betterRetailing.com/Sheetz

RN IN AMERICA
continues
next week

NEW

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CHILLED NITROGEN-INFUSED COFFEE



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RTD CATEGORY

NEWS & MAGS

Newsagent scheme deemed non-viable 'This is not a brand that sits within a shop'

Monocle news cafe plan 'not suitable' for UK

EXCLUSIVE

by **Marcello Perricone**

marcello.perricone@newtrade.co.uk

Publisher Monocle has abandoned its UK Kiosk-kafe franchise plans after admitting that it is "not suitable for franchising".

When its flagship location opened in Paddington in 2015, it looked to combine the profitability of European-style coffee and pastry cafes with the draw of a 300-strong range of niche magazine titles. It had plans to turn into a franchise model in the UK and overseas, but no franchisees were subsequently found.

Ford Consulting was responsible for Kiosk-kafe's operations. Its director, Kevin Webley, said the concept for the cafe/newsagent came from Monocle's editor in chief, Jayson Tyler Brûlé. Webley told RN: "The Paddington store wouldn't be there if it wasn't an owner-operated experiment by the brand itself - we found that as a standalone independent operation, it's not suitable to franchising."

According to Webley, the reason is the fundamental difference between Monocle's desired

business model and the needs of UK retailers.

"Food sales are good, but aren't Starbucks level, and the margin on print is very low, so the challenges for independent operators is that it wouldn't be commercially viable," he said.

"Unlike a traditional newsagent, Kiosk-kafe has a more limited product range that is controlled by Monocle.

"They wouldn't be allowed to sell cigarettes or the Daily Mail, The Sun or House & Garden - wide-reaching, high-volume print titles."

As a result, the company and Ford Consulting has decided to go it alone, with plans to open and directly manage Kiosk-kafe locations in other European locations, including Portugal's capital, Lisbon.

The director explained: "This is not a brand that sits within a shop, and we don't want to set aside a corner of a shop and put in a kiosk.

"The current strategic route is to work with rail network hub owners here and in Switzerland, as they have prime sites in commuter locations that we think are a better fit."

Guardian makeovers still going

The Guardian is still offering store makeovers to newsagents willing to promote the title.

The initiative had an initial run in January, and consists of a bespoke vinyl window display designed and paid for by the Guardian.

Both the newspaper and retailers have final say on its implementation, and the displays must stay up for a minimum of six weeks.

The Guardian's head of sales and revenue publishing, Rob Rattley, said: "The displays have been a successful way to promote the Guardian and Observer in a number of newsagents across the country. We have worked with individual retailers to create a bright and bold visual that has a positive impact on the shop and on our newspaper sales."

Correction: Last week, we printed some inaccurate figures for newspaper core sales. These are the correct values

DAILIES	
Title	CORE SALES September 2018
Daily Express	312,285
Daily Mail	1,073,570
Daily Mirror	490,184
Daily Record	120,366
Daily Star	351,911
Daily Telegraph	325,621
Financial Times	27,263
Guardian	111,337
i	183,622
The Sun	1,196,877
Times	294,112
TOTAL	4,487,148

SATURDAYS	
Title	CORE SALES September 2018
Daily Express	395,908
Daily Mail	1,797,021
Daily Mirror	635,950
Daily Record	142,492
Daily Star	336,450
Daily Telegraph	479,328
Financial Times	67,120
Guardian	252,887
i	213,013
The Sun	1,630,851
Times	467,312
TOTAL	6,418,332

SUNDAYS	
Title	CORE SALES September 2018
Sunday Express	280,025
Mail on Sunday	1,000,522
Sunday Mirror	431,211
Sunday Mail	126,664
Daily Star Sunday	214,085
Sunday Telegraph	277,103
People	167,360
Observer	163,417
Sunday Post	110,859
The Sun	1,060,670
Sunday Times	610,428
TOTAL	4,442,344

Game over for Future mag pair

Future Publishing is to close GamesTM and GamesMaster magazines.

The video gaming titles' final editions were published on 1 November and will remain on sale until the end of the year.

Tony Mott, brand director of games at Future, said: "Despite the company's strong performance overall, GamesTM and GamesMaster are no longer profitable parts of the business.

"The decision was a difficult one, but everyone here is enormously proud of what the magazines have achieved in their lifetimes, which in GamesMaster's case is an incredible 25 years."

Investor fights Johnston Press break-up

Johnston Press' largest shareholder has announced plans to stop the break-up of the publisher's titles and to dissolve its board.

Investor Christen Ager-Hanssen has increased his shareholding from 20% to 25%, placing him 5% away from launching a financial takeover.

"The long and proud 250-year history of Johnston Press has now been replaced by a more recent and tragic history of rampant fee-sucking by its negligent board and incompetent advisers," he said in a statement.

"They have ignored the biggest shareholders, and I decided that if I'm going

to do anything, it is to remove the board."

However, according to analyst Douglas McCabe from Enders Analysis, removing the board would not solve the issue of Johnston Press' £250m debt.

"The key question is whether the board is the key issue for Johnston Press, or the combination

of its level of debt and the hostile market conditions for local media provision," he said.

"Every board can be improved, but structural change cannot be reversed. What Johnston Press ideally needs is an opportunity to move into an investment and innovation phase."

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*brand**



STOCK UP THIS SEASON

REGIONAL NEWS

NFRN

Northern

DHL plans welcomed

Northern members said the assurances given by DHL over the future of Pass My Parcel represent good news for the industry.

National president Mike Michelson attended the district's executive meeting on 23 October where he shared promises he'd received that parcel levels through the service would return to at least previous volumes.

District president Graeme Pentland told RN: "We're receiving around two parcels a week compared to the 50 we received previously, so to hear that DHL has plans to deliver those levels again makes the future a little brighter."

London

MPs quiz ministers on crime

Meetings between the NFRN and MPs have led to a series of written questions to government ministers.

Labour MP Emma Reynolds asked separate questions about crimes against shop workers and the proportion of robberies that involved a weapon. As reported in RN last week, Conservative MP Martin Vickers called for a debate in parliament on retail crime and policing.

Discussing the series of meetings, national president Mike Mitchelson told RN: "We mainly focused on crime, but business rates were also important. We asked for the business rates exemption to be raised from the current level and for the exemption to apply to those with more than one store."



RN columnist wins Community Champion Award

Mike Brown (left) has won a Community Champion Award, run by Reach PLC and the NFRN. The new trophy is designed to reward newsagents who go the extra mile for their communities. The RN columnist and Browns Newsagents proprietor received the prize for his dedication to ensuring his customers still received their deliveries, despite the snow's best efforts during the Beast from the East earlier this year. He said: "It's great for our store. We put it up on Facebook as our last award win generated 24,000 interactions, really helping to raise our profile in the community." As a regional winner, Mike will go forward to compete for the national title, to be announced at the NFRN Awards in February.

Head Office Solution sought to delivery problems 'Reliance on contract drivers is the issue'

Smiths asked for urgent meeting over service

by Jack Courtez
jack.courtez@newtrade.co.uk

Smiths News has been asked to attend an emergency meeting at NFRN's London HQ, following 'a serious deterioration of service levels' in the area.

London district president Nilesh Patel told RN: "In the past week, we've had no supplements, missing papers, late deliveries and an overall serious deterioration of service levels.

"The company's reliance on contract drivers is the issue. Often the contractors subcontract the work, so there's little accountability and no

motivation for the drivers to provide the same service. It also means that the depot becomes clogged with vans attempting to enter, exit and load up at the site because there's little coordination."

Peter Williamson, NFRN head of news operations, said a pencilled-in meeting with the wholesaler was brought forward to deal with the issues.

Smiths' Hemel Hempstead depot serves a large geographic area, following the closure of the company's Borehamwood and Slough branches last year. It has since been

plagued by instances of poor performance. This has led to management being brought in from elsewhere in the business and reductions in staff probation periods.

Williamson said: "We normally see a period of improvement after our meetings with Smiths, followed by a week of disaster, so we need to find a way to challenge the causes of the retail issues. This might be contract drivers."

The meeting is to take place this week. Asked what he hopes will come from the meeting, Patel said: "It would improve things if, like Menzies,

they became less reliant on subcontractors."

Williamson urged retailers with news supply issues to call NFRN Connect on 0800 121 6376.

Upcoming regional trade events

National Council

Date 20-21 November, 9am-5pm

Location Manchester

NFRN/Smiths News Stockport Trade Day

Date 25 November, 9.30am-2pm

Location Lingard Lane, Bredbury Park Industrial Estate, Bredbury

Contact Megan Humphrey with your trade news on 020 7689 3357, megan.humphrey@newtrade.co.uk or @MeganH_RN

YOUR VIEWS

A WAY TO GET OUR VOICES HEARD

Pete Cheema, SGF



This November marks the second anniversary of the establishment of the Scottish Parliament's cross-party group (CPG) on independent convenience stores. Time has flown by since the original proposal for its creation by the Scottish Grocers' Federation and MSP Gordon MacDonald.

The formation of the CPG represented a major political breakthrough in the SGF's political engagement work. Since then, the CPG has proved to be a great success, providing a unique opportunity for retailers

to take issues directly to parliament.

To date, the CPG has discussed subjects including: illicit trade and its impact; protection of retail workers; deposit return; convenience stores and their role in supporting businesses; and the future of retail.

The CPG meets quarterly and provides a unique cross-sectoral platform for retailers to engage directly with MSPs on the issues and challenges facing the independent convenience store industry in Scotland.

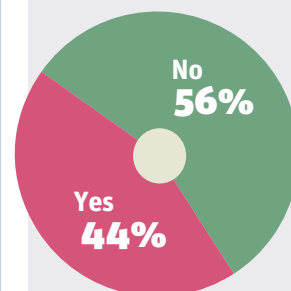


Now more than ever, the Scottish convenience sector requires a high-profile, creditable, cross-industry platform from which its voice can be heard. Given the pressures facing convenience retail, such as the 'real' cost of employment, as well as taxes, business rates and the ever-growing tome of regulatory restrictions, the

influential forum provided by the CPG and the leadership provided by SGF are absolutely essential.

The industry must continue to use the CPG to get government and politicians of all political persuasions to listen to the real concerns, challenges and issues facing this key sector of the Scottish economy.

RN READER POLL



Have you ever written to your MP about an issue you have faced in store?

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION

How much have you invested in your store over the past year?

Vote now at
betterRetailing.com

■ We have to pay Payzone to close our shop

Earlier this month, we made the decision to close down our newsagent. We act as an agent for Western Union and UPS, which we've had no problems ending our time with.

We take card payment within the shop, and also provide top-up services for pay-as-you-go users of gas, electricity and phones, all of which are serviced by Payzone.

Earlier this year, we were issued a machine by Payzone and were told it was a new upgrade to the system that would be given to all its current agents. At the time of installation, Payzone did not mention that a new contract would be put in place, nor did we sign anything.

I spoke to a representative on the phone on 24 October who claimed we should have received a letter in the post that detailed this, which we never did. They also confirmed the letter was not sent by recorded post,



meaning they would not have known if we had received it or not.

He said, in order to terminate our contract, we must pay a sum of £1,477 or leave the newsagent for somebody else to run. In the case of the latter, the contract would be passed onto the new owner until January 2021, when it's due to expire.

However, we were not looking to sell the business as a going concern. We are a struggling micro-business and it certainly wasn't an easy decision to close our shop after running it for 11 years,

of which we have been a Payzone agent for 10.

We now have to pay a fee of £1,477 in order for us to close properly, which isn't possible.

Yasmin Akhtar
A&S Mini Market,
Bedfordshire

Responding to the letter, a Payzone spokesperson claimed that all of its partnered stores received a letter, and that A & S Mini Market did not respond. The company said it entered the retailer into a new three-year contract because it did not hear back from them. Payzone refused to negotiate on the terms of the retailer's exit.

VIEW FROM THE COUNTER with Mike Brown



At 4.30am on Sunday morning, I was making a cup of tea before opening the shop when I heard a commotion in the nearby square. From experience, I decided to keep a low profile, but in hindsight, perhaps I should have gone to investigate. Apparently, several youths were using the roof of my van as a trampoline while taking selfies.

When I discovered what had happened, I called the police, who were very sympathetic and gave me a reference number for insurance purposes. So far, I have heard nothing, despite providing the contact details of witnesses who live in the square and CCTV footage from a nearby café.

The following day, I received a nice surprise when Adrian Craig from Reach, in conjunction with the NFRN, came into the shop and presented me with an award. I was awarded 'Community Champion of the North of England' for the month of July. I don't know who nominated me, but it's really pleasing to be recognised in this way.

Our local paper, The Northern Echo, is publishing a special Remembrance Sunday edition on 7 November. It produces a special edition every year, but this one, commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War, has created particular interest and quite a few customers have pre-ordered a copy – 10p from every copy sold is being donated to the Royal British Legion.

PRODUCT NEWS

What's new



A nice warm cup of wellbeing

Packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory ingredients, SugaVida's Turmeric Latte is designed for those looking for a healthier hot drink.

RRP £9.99

Contact stephanie@wholebeinghealthfoods.com



Cut yourself a slice of festive cheer

Arden & Amici's panettones, in Gluten Free Mini Panettone and Tipsy Tiramisu Low Bake Panettone varieties, are gourmet sweet food for the festive period.

RRP Tipsy Tiramisu (£10.00) and Gluten Free (£2.50)

Contact enquiries@arden-foods.co.uk



Get mixed up with a blend of botanicals

Wildcat Gin has an ABV of 41.5% and is distilled for mixing, using 10 botanicals. It has a classic gin taste with a predominantly juniper aroma.

RRP £28

Contact victoria@wearewire.co



All OK for VK

Global Brands has added a new Watermelon drink to its VK portfolio, following consumer demand for the popular flavour.



Ginger up

Supermalt has added Ginger Beer to its range. The non-alcoholic carbonated soft drink is available in original and zero-sugar varieties.



Piece of cake

Premier Foods is extending its Mr Kipling and Cadbury Cakes ranges to include seasonal products aimed at shoppers looking for a treat.



Lotus pocus

Lotus Bakeries has unveiled a new jar design for its Lotus Biscoff spread, featuring images of Lotus Biscoff biscuits alongside images of the product in use.



Shoot for the stars

Britvic's new TV advert for Fruit Shoot Juiced aims to drive awareness of the brand among parents of children aged four to eight years old.



Child's play

Dairy Crest has teamed up with Nickelodeon to feature popular kids' TV characters across its Cathedral City Kids' snacking range.

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Ale of a time

Carlsberg is launching its first range of bottled ales in four years for its Joshua Tetley & Son brand, including Tetley's Golden Ale and Tetley's No.3 Pale Ale.



That's a doozy

Doozy Vape Co has announced the launch of its new Nicotine Salts range that provides a stronger hit of nicotine compared with regular e-liquids.



Taste of home

McCain is launching a new recipe for its Home Chips brand following three years of development, with the brand having a 27% penetration in the category.

Menthol ban is a vaping opportunity

by Priyanka Jethwa

priyanka.jethwa@newtrade.co.uk

Retailers that become a vaping destination before the menthol tobacco ban in 2020 will have the best chance of converting and retaining shoppers.

That was one key takeaway from a panel on vaping at the Local Shop Summit event in London last month.

Nick Geens, head of reduced-risk products at JTI, who chaired the panel, said one way to ensure success was by having regular conversations with shoppers to explain the different types of products available to them to help generate initial interest.

"This can be done in a number of ways – through PoS, but also by opening up a product and going



through it in detail with shoppers," he said.

Andrew Newton, who runs Nisa Local in Cradley, Dudley, said he approached this initially by giving staff who smoked a vape device to help them better understand the product.

"Margins can be up to 80%, and with vape shops generally closing earlier than convenience stores, it gives independents an edge over them," he added.

Meanwhile, Vince Malone, of Premier Tenby Stores & Post in Tenby, said since he started to sell tobacco products in February, including vape kits, trading overall has increased by 40% since last year, with 15% of that growth attributed to tobacco and newspapers.

He added: "Retailers should look at the category as one that is likely to make them a lot of money."

Birds Eye's new range recreates takeaway chicken at home

Birds Eye's new sharing takeaway-style chicken bites, Chicken Shop, will be available this month to retailers across the nation.

The range will be available in four varieties: Buttermilk Strips, Hot & Fiery Chunks, Maple & BBQ Wings and Southern Fried Wings.

The launch will be supported by a £3.5m marketing investment, with TV advertising and social media activity, as well as a programme of in-store events.

The launch is aimed at tapping into the growing demand for chicken,

with frozen chicken currently worth £440m, having gone up in value by 9.3% and in volume by 4.7% year on year.

Frozen bone-in chicken – such as wings – is also growing by 25%, alongside chicken strips by 29% year on year.

Markos Papavlasopoulos, senior brand manager at Birds Eye, said: "We're seeing an increasing trend towards informal eating such as big night in occasions.

"To cater for this, the Birds Eye Chicken Shop range can be stored in the freezer and cooked in 25 minutes."

Tilda ad is cultural event

Tilda's new advertising campaign, Tildalicious, encourages shoppers to explore new cultures.

The advert, which will be on air until the end of November, features 14 dishes and represents a wide range of languages and nationalities.

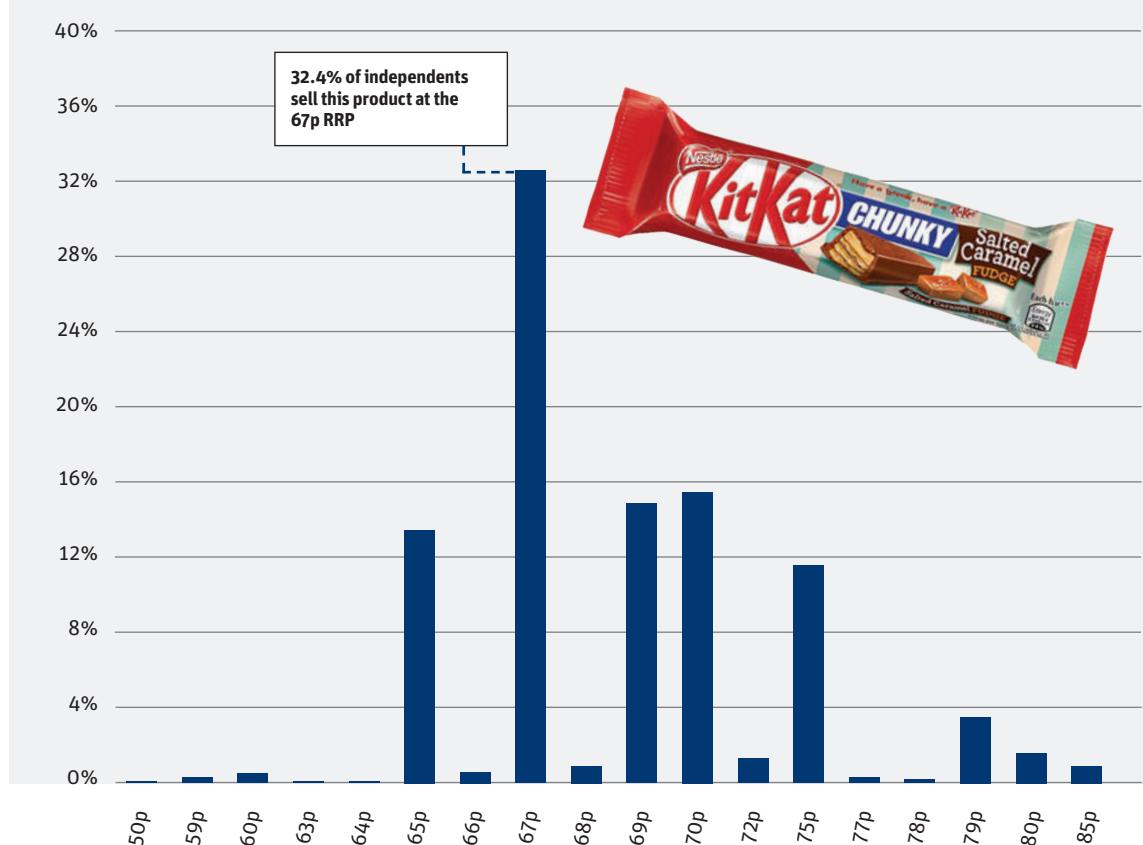
Anna Beheshti, brand lead at Tilda, said: "This is our biggest brand campaign yet, with a £1.5m investment to reach new consumers and drive brand growth.

"We have developed a campaign that illustrates Tilda's positioning at the heart of multiple cultures and communities."

PRICEWATCH

Profit checker Single chocolate bars

KitKat Chunky Salted Caramel Fudge 42g Price distribution %



Price checker

PRODUCT

Ferrero Kinder Joy Christmas
20g

KitKat Chunky Salted Caramel Fudge
42g

Mars Snickers Duo
83.4g

Cadbury Twirl
43g

Mars Bar Duo
85g

Mars Twix Xtra
75g

Cadbury Wispa
36g

KitKat
41.5g

Nestlé Milkybar Medium
25g

Cadbury Wispa Gold
48g

Maltesers Buttons Treat Bag
68g

Kinder Bueno White Bar
39g

Total

Analysis and retailer insight

Single chocolate bars are the heart of a convenience store's offer, but cheap multipacks in supermarkets are putting on the pressure.

This is evident in the table (right), which shows that independents are pricing standard singles, such as Cadbury Twirl, Wispa and Kinder Bueno below RRP to stay competitive.

Extra margin is available on bigger lines, such as Mars Duo and Twix Xtra, which can be priced above RRP as they offer better value to shoppers.

There are also products such as Kinder Joy that offers children's toys for extra value. Shops such as the c-store in central Sussex in the table are able to charge nearly twice the RRP.

If you must price keenly, consider merchandising chocolate singles in baskets next to your food to go, with a lunch meal deal to increase spend. It's essential to offer shoppers choice, though, so stocking healthy snacks such as fruit next to chocolate bars is a great way to show you have the full offer available.

Sarj Patel

STORE Pasture Lane Stores
LOCATION Loughborough, Leicestershire
SIZE 1,000sq ft
TYPE village

TOP TIP

Stock price-marked bars to help communicate value to your shoppers



We stick to the RRP in the category, but also buy a lot of price-marked stock from wholesalers. Around 80% of Cadbury lines at wholesale come price-marked – it's better value for money and it sells far quicker than those that are not price-marked. Single bars of chocolate are incremental to the category, with Cadbury Dairy Milk single bars the bestseller, but over the past year, I have noticed a gradual shift toward more shoppers picking up larger sharing blocks because most of them come in £1 price-marked packs.

Peter Robinson


STORE Robinson Retail
LOCATION Pembroke, Pembrokeshire
SIZE 1,300sq ft
TYPE village

TOP TIP

Set your own prices because RRP doesn't offer enough profit



We set the price of single chocolate bars above the RRP in this category because the RRP set by manufacturers doesn't produce enough gross profit to cover other costs. I find that people are happy to pay a little more; it doesn't seem to bother them. We also stock a few lines that are price-marked. Bestsellers in the category include the Euro Shopper range because of its price, which makes it the cheapest line we offer. We also set promotions in the category comprising two or three bars for £1, depending on the brand.

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Data supplied by



EDFM is a specialist in helping leading suppliers to the UK's independent convenience channel get value, insights and business benefits from EPoS data. To find out how they could help you call 07976 295094

SUPERMARKETS

AVERAGE UK RETAIL PRICE*	BOOKER RRP	RETAILER 1 HIGH STREET STORE IN ESSEX VILLAGE	RETAILER 2 POST OFFICE AND NEWSAGENT IN READING SUBURB	RETAILER 3 LOCAL C-STORE AND POST OFFICE IN NORTH EAST COASTAL TOWN	RETAILER 4 C-STORE AND NEWSAGENT IN SUSSEX COASTAL RESORT	RETAILER 5 LARGE C-STORE IN CARDIFF SUBURB	RETAILER 6 C-STORE IN WIRRAL VILLAGE HIGH STREET
£1.07	£1.09	99p	–	£2.08	£2.08	£1	99p
70p	67p	74p	65p	69p	69p	65p	67p
90p	79p	95p	85p	95p	89p	90p	89p
55p	70p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p
90p	79p	95p	85p	95p	89p	90p	89p
90p	79p	95p	85p	89p	89p	80p	89p
55p	70p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p
64p	65p	74p	69p	59p	69p	69p	80p
61p	61p	59p	55p	60p	59p	55p	59p
55p	70p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p	55p
£1	£1	£1	£1	£1	£1	–	£1
60p	79p	–	60p	60p	60p	60p	60p
£8.97	£8.49						

* from a sample of 3,500 stores

TESCO 1	SAINSBURY'S 2	ASDA 3
£1	£1	80p
60p	50p	60p
80p	85p	–
60p	65p	60p
80p	–	–
80p	85p	–
60p	65p	–
–	50p	–
–	45p	60p
60p	65p	60p
60p	–	–
60p	65p	60p
£7.60	£6.75	£3.80

Shailesh Patel

STORE WHSmith Local
LOCATION Purley, London
SIZE 900sq ft
TYPE town

TOP TIP

Keep your display clean and tidy, and make sure you have good availability of products



In this category, we set the prices for single chocolate bars slightly above the RRP. This is to cover our increasing overheads, from the rise in the national living wage to business rates and rent costs. Usually, the RRP in this category doesn't cover these costs and, as a result, for the past four years I have been setting prices slightly higher – I don't think shoppers mind paying a few pence extra in this category. To make the most of the category, I recommend stocking bestsellers such as Cadbury, Mars and Nestlé products, as these are what shoppers want.

Nicola Ransome

STORE Welton's
LOCATION Market Harborough, Leicestershire
SIZE 2,000sq ft
TYPE village

TOP TIP

Know your local market and competition, and focus on bestsellers



When it comes to the single chocolate bar category, we normally stock pricemarked packs. If we do price them ourselves, we go above RRP and sell them all at the same price. To get the best prices, we shop at Booker Wholesale because they always have deals such as two-for-£1 pricemarked packs, or bars at 55p to 60p pricemarked. I would say that the category is not great for margins, but overcoming this is all about pricing according to what you think your shoppers are willing to pay.

SPECIAL REPORT

How best to invest

Last month, the ACS revealed that the average symbol group store invests £13,636 in its business each year. So, the RN team asked readers a simple question: how would you invest that money in your store today?



How I'd spend my £13,636

Sarj Patel

Pasture Lane Stores, Loughborough, Leics



In rural Leicestershire, Sarj Patel runs a business that a mixture of locals and university students rely on – many for more than just a top-up shop every few days. How would he use this money to improve his offer?

The dream

If everything was already fixed and updated, I would bulk up on wines and spirits, especially gin – this is a trend I haven't capitalised on yet – and offer promotions on it. I would also hire in more storage space for this range.

Essential update

One area we need to concentrate on is our food-to-go offering. We have a coffee machine already, but I would like to bring in things such as fresh pastries, doughnuts and cakes. This is what will help us stand out from the competition.

Appliances

We recently had a refit where we added in new low ceiling lights,

but if I had an additional £14,000 or so to spend on extras, I would refurbish the store front by adding a lick of paint and new signs and windows.

Staffing

I think it is so important that staff get the correct training to do their job properly, so I would enrol all three of my staff into a programme that covers things such as EPoS systems, and food safety and hygiene.

Investing in the latest trends

I would like to bring in a gluten-free aisle, as the trend is becoming more relevant to my shoppers. At the moment, we don't have space for it, so I would need to create that space by moving things around.



How I'd spend my £13,636

Bay Bashir

Belle Vue Go Local, Middlesbrough



Bay Bashir runs three stores, including an award-winning convenience store that thrives even amid tough competition from supermarkets and discounters.

The Dream

There are some items where, if you overthink it, you'll miss the opportunity, so if you've got the cash, it's important to use it. Tango Ice Blast



slush machines may cost £5,000, but they pay for themselves 10 times over. Special items like this are all about putting cash in the till.

Essential update

If you are thrifty, £13,636 will go a long way in keeping overall store standards high. It can be hard to measure the return on keeping flooring, shelving, outside work and other basics looking good, but it's a must considering the level of competition stores now face.

Appliances

You have to look at the bigger picture, look at when they will begin to pay for themselves. There's always a cheaper option at the point of purchase when it comes to refrigeration, but when you look at your bills,

you'll find it was worth paying that bit extra in the first place.

Staffing

I already give incentives out to my staff to make sure they are rewarded for good practice. I'd use the funds to give further cash incentives to staff. Running several stores, you can't be everywhere at once, and rewarding staff helps to ensure standards are kept high.

Investing in the latest trends

I'd update my coffee machine. In one store I replaced my Nescafé machine with a Rijo machine and I've gone from four cups per day to 35, even though the price has also increased by 30p. With investing in trends such as coffee, it's all about brand, in-store placement and quality.



How I'd spend my £13,636

Ray Monelle

Everyday (Orchard News), Western-super-Mare



In Ray Monelle's seaside store, improving knowledge about the latest retailing methods – for him and his staff – seems to take centre stage alongside the ambition to make fresh food to go in-store.

The dream

I would bring in handmade sandwiches. We'd also look for other new products and innovation, and explore ways to increase turnover and footfall in-store. We'd look to learn about more efficient ways to handle stock.

Essential update

We've already done it. We recently had a refit and upturned the store, so we refitted the lighting, flooring and practically redesigned the entire shop floor. We had it all done in one go. We're still limited on space, however.

Appliances

We had a total new security system installed that included a new alarm,

improved CCTV and had new fridges installed. This was all part of the essential appliance work.

Staffing

We currently have two members of staff, so with an extra £13,636, I would recruit a couple more members of part-time staff for extra cover. This would free up some of my time to look into how else we can develop the business.

Investing in the latest trends

If I was given money to invest in a trend, I would increase my food-to-go offering and bring in things like a hot counter – this is an area in retail that is constantly growing. If I had the room, I'd also like to bring in more gluten-free lines.



SPECIAL REPORT



How I'd spend my £13,636

Chaz Chahal

Simply Fresh the Forge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire



Chaz's village store in Worcestershire receives business from a mixture of elderly residents and mothers living in the nearby estate. How would he use the money to improve his offer to these customers?

The dream

I would install self-checkouts. We see more of them in the multiples and they're more widely accepted by customers who shop in convenience stores. It's not something that would work now, but it will become a trend in the next few years.

Essential update

One area which would receive an update in my stores are the CCTV systems. Security is important for preventing shop theft. Having a system that is visible to customers increases the likelihood of deterring thieves from stealing.

Appliances

I'd invest in equipment that would fit with the branding of the shop. For example, if it was a coffee machine,

I would have a cabinet and bin next to it. Sticking a standalone coffee machine next to an aisle just looks cheap.

Staffing

Internal training is important. I'd use the funds to train one senior member of staff and increase their knowledge on areas such as operating an EPOS system or merchandising. They can then pass this knowledge onto their colleagues.

Investing in the latest trends

Vaping and food to go are big trends, but I wouldn't have a complete overhaul of any one particular category. I'd look at how the areas are performing within my stores in general and invest in them when needed.

How I'd spend my £13,636

Josh Taylor

Tywardreath Village Shop, Cornwall



The Cornish store already runs as a community-focused enterprise, but these extra funds could help employ a disabled member of staff or improve the store's tech resources.

The dream

I think we would look at introducing new facilities to test out in the shop. Our coffee machine was a good little investment, so we would use the money to test some new services like a hot food counter.

Essential updates

The shape of our store is quite awkward, so we would look to leverage that money to build more stock space. We would probably use some of the money to give the front of the store a new look.

Appliances

We could definitely update our fridge and freezer to a more efficient, environmentally-friendly model and

we would probably look at some of the gadgets that are available that do stock take for you.

Staffing

This would enable us to employ someone else and, if the money wasn't a one-off, we could employ those in the community who might not be able to get employment due to disabilities, for example.

Investing in the latest trends

We are already doing quite a lot with technology and have an app and a website updated. It would be good to move the cash machine outside because, at the moment, it is in store so customers can't use it after 6pm.





How I'd spend my £13,636

Paul Patel

WHSmith Local Dibden Purlieu, Hampshire



Making sure Paul Patel's local community is fully aware of the products he offers would be the big priority when it comes to making a big investment in his store.

The dream

I think I would spend the money largely on marketing as you can never do enough. I would like to be active on social media, compose a website, print more leaflets and distribute them more widely and even advertise on the radio.

Essential updates

If we had extra money, we could purchase in bulk and get better deals on promotional stock. Then we could display in-store marketing to promote it. We could also reduce our overheads so there would be less pressure on cash flow.

Appliances

We could do with a new, more energy-efficient chiller. I would also

like to improve access to the shop and replace our manual doors with sliding doors – so there is easier access for people with scooters or less mobility.

Staffing

Small businesses tend to focus on day-to-day operations and forget this side. Very few invest enough in training, so I would like to help staff broaden their skills and perhaps organise a day trip for our newspaper boys.

Investing in the latest trends

As I say, we could do much more with social media and spend the money on doing a course or get help to make a website. We'd engage a professional marketing company that offers these services.

How I'd spend my £13,636

Robert Kirkwood

The Corner Shop Convenience Store (Premier Express), Crossgates, Fife



Robert Kirkwood owns two stores, but in his first store he would love to be able to give his staff a loyalty bonus and offer food to go.

The dream

I would like to get nice new tiled flooring because, at the moment, we have plastic tiles that can leak. And then I would also like to spend the money on some proper shelving for the store room.

Essential updates

Our computer system is running slowly at the moment, so it would be good to have an updated one. At the moment we have to make do with what we have got and it does affect some of our processes.

Appliances

The store is only three years old, so we are mostly all good with our appliances. Maybe a new EPoS system

would be helpful – stores seem to be using more and more data in their businesses now.

Staffing

It would be great to give some kind of bonus for loyalty to our staff, if we had the opportunity. The budget announced that the minimum wage will increase again, so it would be good to know we could afford these rises.

Investing in the latest trends

If I had the room, I would like to spend some money on food to go in this store and set up a bakery area. Other than that, we have Zapper, and EPoS, so I think we are okay. ●



XMAS SOFT DRINKS

Test your festive range

Chiller space is a valuable asset and as retailers approach the final weeks before Christmas, there will be huge pressure to increase ranges across many different categories. **Priyanka Jethwa** challenges the big soft drink segments on why they should keep their spots

WHAT'S THE POINT OF... STOCKING ADULT SOFT DRINKS AT CHRISTMAS?

For many years now, the 'cocktail trend' has been slowly changing the way many consumers think about drinking at home.

This year, it has grown further still and the arrival of the festive season will give many partygoers the excuse to be even more ambitious with their mixes. It means, therefore, that adult soft drinks are now a must-stock, suppliers say.

Amy Burgess, trade communications manager at Coca-Cola European Partners, says retailers should consider siting adult soft drinks, such as Schweppes, alongside their alcohol range: "Adult soft drinks is a growing sector that is ideal for home entertaining, and drinks like Appleiser are popular whether served

on their own or as an ingredient for a cocktail or mocktail," she says.

Meanwhile, demand for premium products has had a huge impact in the adult soft drinks category, with more focus on quality over quantity. Jen Draper, head of marketing at Global Drinks, says flavour combinations, such as Franklin & Sons' Cloudy Apple & Yorkshire Rhubarb with Cinnamon, appeal to those looking for something different.

"Retailers must ensure they have a full range of premium soft drinks in a selection of interesting flavours," she says. "Placing them next to food pairings provides an opportunity for independents to upsell."

WHAT'S THE POINT OF... STOCKING COLAS AND CARBONATES AT CHRISTMAS?

The colas and carbonates category is

Adult soft drinks is a growing sector that is ideal for home entertaining

extremely important for retailers to invest in at Christmas time, and within this, energy drinks are the biggest-selling soft drink segment for independents.

Currently representing more than £400m-worth of sales in the channel, Lucozade Ribena Suntory says energy brands should be an essential part of any independent retailer's chiller.

Scott Meredith, the company's sales director, says in order to maximise sales in the run-up to Christmas, energy drinks should be brand blocked with a minimum two facings per flavour.

Stocking multipacks of cola and carbonates is also essential, Adrian Troy, marketing director at Barr Soft Drinks, says – especially to those preparing for get-togethers and parties.





Making cocktails at home is now driving an increasing number of premium soft drinks sales



CCEP expects a boost in both Appletiser and Schweppes sales

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XMAS SOFT DRINKS

“To promote multipacks, retailers should stock up on best-selling soft drinks brands and make the most of seasonal PoS.”

Furthermore, as research shows, sales of new flavours are growing at 16% year on year, and Simon Gray, founder and managing director at Boost Drinks, says for retailers to capitalise on this, stocking products such as the brand's Cosmic Glow – which is Grape & Cherry flavour – will help increase basket spend. “Boost is also introducing a 250ml can as a limited-edition option that's designed to appeal to consumers looking for new flavours in the winter months,” he adds.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF... STOCKING WATER-PLUS AT CHRISTMAS?

The increasing popularity in the water-plus category, which is water with added functional benefits, can be attributed to growing public concern about being mindful about calorie and sugar intake, while still wanting some flavour.

One of the biggest trends this Christmas in the water-plus

£400m
The value of the
energy drinks
category to
independents

category is quality, as younger shoppers look for upmarket products and packaging, or to brands that are less available at the multiples – in other words, craft. Amelia Parker, brand marketing manager at Clearly Drinks, says stocking craft-style drinks can be beneficial to independent retailers thanks to their higher price points and margins.

“Consumers, particularly the under-30s, are now considering flavoured water as a soft drink, and are experimenting with more adventurous flavours and styles of soft drinks,” she says.

Meanwhile, retailers should also offer a range of sparkling varieties this season, targeted at those looking to abstain from alcohol, but who still want a fizzy option.

Burgess, at Coca-Cola European Partners, says: “The flavoured sparkling range is available in a 600ml format. The pack design also retains the brand's bold, simplistic look, to appeal to younger consumers. CCEP's Glacéau Smartwater is available in four sparkling flavours: Berry & Kiwi, Lemon, Green Apple and Grapefruit & Watermelon.”



Consumers, particularly the under-30s, are now considering flavoured water as a soft drink



WHAT'S THE POINT OF... STOCKING SOFT DRINKS FOR KIDS AT CHRISTMAS?

Burgess says Capri-Sun Fruity Water is now worth £2m, demonstrating the increasing demand for water-based options for children.

But while regular soft drinks remain popular, retailers can also capitalise by stocking a range of milk-based drinks. Milk-based drinks remain excluded from the sugar levy, and retailers can increase sales by siting them in the soft drinks chiller to offer an alternative for parents and carers looking for something different to give to children.

Richard Duplock, marketing manager at Yazoo, says: “Within the soft drinks category, flavoured milk is a category worth £290m, growing at 4.1% year on year, making this a category that retailers cannot overlook when considering their soft drinks sales.”

From speaking to industry leaders, if you want to cater to the widest possible demographic, retailers must ensure they have a good selection of soft drinks available for children, as well as a selection that appeals to parents. This involves soft drinks that offer a reduced sugar content, that are natural and have a high water content. ●





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*Nielsen Total GB value - 23.06.18. **Nielsen Total GB - 4 weeks ending Dec 20th 2017. © 2018 The Coca-Cola Company. All rights reserved. COCA-COLA, the design of the Contour Bottle and TASTE THE FEELING are registered trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company

DON'T MISS NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

OUT
9 NOVEMBER



The Tobacco Report

How the market has changed in the past year,
how the convenience channel is performing
and what suppliers believe will happen in the
next 12 months



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THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES



Launch of the week

A SMART MAGAZINE FOR CUSTOMERS' HOMES

A new technology one-shot features reviews, guides and buying advice covering the latest gadgets consumers can buy to turn the homes of today into the homes of tomorrow

AMAZON ALEXA AND Google Home are becoming more ubiquitous, so many people are wondering what the deal is with 'smart homes' – what they are, what they can do and how much it costs to turn your house into one are all constant questions.

GMC Media's latest magazine is here to help. Smart Home is the newest technology one-shot and focuses on the latest advancements in home gadgets. It features reviews, guides and buying advice covering everything from electronic thermostats and smart light bulbs to personal assistants, as well as hack-proofing your Wi-Fi devices.



SMART HOME
On sale 8 November
Frequency one shot
Price £7.99
Distributor Seymour
Display with Ideal
Home, Country Living,
Your Home

My week in magazines



Marcello Perricone

Magazines reporter

marcello.perricone@newtrade.co.uk

A DEDICATED AREA CAN BRING REAL CHRISTMAS CHEER

We're less than two months away from Christmas, officially kicking off the season as far as the magazine industry is concerned.

Last week, we ran a feature on the best titles to stock in the run-up to Christmas, giving you a heads-up on the biggest trends for the end of the year. However, there is one way to boost sales that does not rely on publishers: Christmas sections.

Many established independents are aware of the value of a dedicated Christmas section, taking a whole part of the store and converting it into a one-stop shop for seasonal products. By stocking cards, toys and stationery alongside special Christmas titles, you can boost the sales of multiple categories.

In addition, Christmas sections not only allow customers to find all related products in a single area and increase basket spend, they also incentivise impulse purchases.

As the festivities begin, you should ensure you have a Christmas section in your shop, refresh its stock regularly, and continue to display all your products tidily and attractively. By taking advantage of this annual opportunity, you can increase all your sales, not just those of magazines.

Correction

In the standfirst of 19 October's Launch of the Week, we stated publisher Immediate Media was responsible for Edition Dog magazine, rather than the actual publisher, Warners Group Publications. We apologise for any inconvenience.

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GRAND DESIGNS

- Focused on extension, renovations and self-builds, Grand Designs features style guides and product reviews for indoor and outdoor projects.
- December's edition includes timber builds and kitchen projects, alongside a preview of the Riba House of the Year awards.



On sale 7 November
Frequency monthly
Price £4.40
Distributor Marketforce
Display with Homebuilding & Renovating, Self Build and Design, Build It



YOU & YOUR WEDDING

- This wedding magazine has advice, ideas and articles about all aspects of wedding ceremonies, including locations, dresses and food.
- The last issue of 2018 doubles as the first issue of 2019, and comes with a free 60-page venue guide of the most beautiful places to get married in the UK.



On sale out now
Frequency bimonthly
Price £5.50
Distributor Frontline
Display with Brides, Perfect Wedding, Wedding Ideas



STEAM RAILWAY

- A magazine for train enthusiasts, Steam Railway includes features and articles on and analysis of steam locomotives.
- This issue comes with a free DVD that takes an in-depth look at 15 heavyweight trains, including their features, routes and engines.



On sale 9 November
Frequency monthly
Price £4.40
Distributor Frontline
Display with Rail, Railway Magazine, Heritage Railway



THIS IS SLIME SQUAD

- Aimed at seven- to 10-year-olds, this kids' magazine focuses on DIY projects using slime.
- This issue includes a 'slime and sparkle' sleepover guide, a slime design kit and a competition to win a slime bundle worth more than £250.



On sale out now
Frequency monthly
Price £3.99
Distributor Marketforce
Display with Animals and You, Unicorn Universe



PUZZLE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL 2018

- This Christmas staple is back with a selection of puzzles for all ages.
- The 2018 edition includes a covermounted free pen and a £2,500 prize competition.



On sale 5 November
Frequency annual
Price £3.99
Distributor Seymour
Display with Puzzler Collection, Take a Puzzle



JAGUAR WORLD

- This motoring magazine has features, test drives and the latest news on cars from the UK car manufacturer.
- December's edition includes 32 pages of Christmas gift ideas and a restoration guide.



On sale out now
Frequency monthly
Price £4.99
Distributor Seymour
Display with Mercedes Enthusiast, Classic Ford

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1 Ideal Home	30/10	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Country Living	31/10	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Your Home	31/10	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 25 Beautiful Homes	01/11	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 House Beautiful	06/11	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Country Homes & Interiors	01/11	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Homes & Gardens	01/11	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Living Etc	01/11	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Style at Home	31/10	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 House & Garden	05/11	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data from independent stores supplied by

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Partworks				Collectables			
Title	No	Pts	£	Title	No	Pts	£
DeAgostini				Hachette			
Art Gallery	35	60	8.99	2000 AD			
British Steam Railways	35	50	1.99	The Ultimate Collection	31	80	9.99
Build the Jaguar	85	100	8.99	Art of Quilting	48	150	3.99
Build Your Own R2-D2	95	100	8.99	Assassins Creed:			
Cake Decorating	34	90	3.99	The Official Collection	44	80	9.99
Classic Dinky Toys Collection	22	60	11.99	Big & Little Crochet	18	72	4.99
Enhancing Your Mind, Body, Spirit	95	120	3.99	Classic Routemaster	41	130	8.99
Magiki Cuddle Buddies	26	30	3.99	Draw The Marvel Way	74	100	4.99
My Animal Farm	70	70	5.99	Marvel's Mightiest Heroes	127	130	9.99
Star Wars Helmet Coll'n	74	80	9.99	The All Killer No Filler Deadpool Collection	5	60	1.99
Zippo Collection	82	100	19.99	Transformers GN Collection	49	80	9.99
Eagle Moss				Warhammer	57	80	9.99
DC Comics Graphic Novel	83	100	9.99	Warhammer 40,000: Conquest	9	80	1.99
Game of Thrones	59	60	9.99	Panini			
My Little Pony				F1 Collection	67	70	10.99
Colouring Adventures	87	80	4.50	Marvel Figures	21	84	11.99
Star Trek Ships	136	130	10.99	Supercars	5	60	2.99

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