

A man with a short beard and a grey t-shirt is looking at a product on a grocery store shelf. The shelves are filled with various products, including bottles and cans. The lighting is bright, and the background is slightly blurred.

EMERGING CONVENIENCE RETAILER TRENDS + HOW BRANDS CAN MAKE AN IMPACT.

CLARION'S INDEPENDENT RETAILER & MEDIA RESEARCH.



How can brands stand out in a crowded market and make an impact with retailers? What insight and data do retailers value? What support do they look for? And what do changing media habits mean for a brand's trade media outreach strategy?

Clarion has recently undertaken extensive research, exploring the big challenges retailers face going into 2023, changing shopper habits and business priorities amid the cost-of-living crisis, the role of trade media and what suppliers can do to support retailers in a challenging market.

Our research included an exclusive Clarion roundtable, chaired by former Grocer managing editor Julia Glotz, bringing together leading convenience retailers from across the UK.



Here's what our research told us...

A SURVEY
OF 250
RETAILERS

EXCLUSIVE
RETAILER
ROUNDTABLE

MEDIA
RESEARCH


JULIA GLOTZ
EXPERT
OPINION

IN-DEPTH
SESSIONS WITH
NEWTRADE
AND C-TALK

VCP EXPERT
ADVICE

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE AN IMPACT WITH RETAILERS IN 2023?

- **Relationships are everything** and retailers value the relationship they have with brands and their reps above everything else, but it's important these relationships are two-way.
- Retailers are looking to brands to **teach not preach** and are in fact crying out for more **insight and sharing of information**, tailored regionally or even better, targeted to their individual store. Fresh, chilled and frozen categories were noted as being absent on the advice front.
- **Brands that help retailers navigate legislation are well-regarded** with HFSS regulations specifically mentioned as an opportunity for brands.
- The cost-of-living crisis is top of everyone's agenda right now, including retailers, who are **looking for compassion and support** from suppliers, separate from the day-to-day.
- Whether it's at awards, trade shows or other events, retailers value the opportunity to **network with and learn from other retailers**. Much of this is led by trade publications but retailers are very much open to supplier-led networking events.
- **Retailers love listening to and learning from likeminded retailers**. They also enjoy having a voice themselves and having a platform to talk about what they're doing in their business.



"Margin is massive for us at the minute, especially with energy prices and rising costs, minimum wages etc. you could be working on a margin of 10-20% which is just not enough to cover overheads"

"The fresh, chilled and frozen sectors outside of ice cream are massively underrepresented with nobody currently providing us with useful advice"

"There are so many companies that just come along, take a picture, give you a voucher and you think – what's the point of that? They need to pass on the learnings and advise"

clarion
**TRADE
MATTERS**

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL WHEN IT COMES TO RETAILER MEDIA CONSUMPTION.

**Paul Cheema, Malcolm's Store retailer,
founder of c-talk and ACS board member:**

"The world is changing. Retailer media habits are changing. Unlike us 'old-school' retailers, second generation retailers don't shop for the week, they shop for the day, or even AM to PM. They don't even have a back office or a stock room. They want everything instantly. Everything needs to be on demand and on their phone."

**We need to ensure we're reaching all
retailers via a multi-channel approach.**

2nd Generation Retailer

- Digital natives
- Avid user of WhatsApp, LI, Facebook and Twitter
- Experimenting with the likes of TikTok and Snapchat for retail info
- Prefers virtual events
- Loves learning from their peers

Retail Veterans

- Still enjoys reading print but starting to consume more digital
- Still enjoys events and looks forward to awards season
- Continue to learn from their peers
- Strong wholesale relationships



TRADE PUBLICATIONS STILL MATTER BUT DIGITAL IS ON THE RISE.

clarion
**TRADE
MATTERS**

- Trade media consumption is changing. **2nd generation retailers are more digitally driven and, whilst longstanding retailers are still consuming print media, their digital consumption is increasing vs. switching.**
- According to the recent ABC figures, whilst magazine sales in the trade & professional category are down 4.8% YOY, titles such as Retail News are reporting growth of 2.1% in paid-for circulation, outperforming the market by 6.9%.
- So, whilst 32%* of retailers might be going more digital, there is still an overwhelmingly positive sentiment towards print media from retailers, with a vast majority saying they use it to 'stay up to date' with industry trends.
- 84% of Clarion's retailer panel said they read trade publications to 'stay informed' of what is happening in their area of retail.
- However, retailers are increasingly looking towards digital to stay informed. A majority of more than 60%* who say they have switched to digital say they use trade websites to 'better understand and analyse what is happening in the broader retail sector'
- This implies that there is an appetite for easily digestible digital content that provides deeper insight, which in turn suggests brands should look at doing more in-depth digital activity like shortcasts, webinars and video interviews etc.

"Whilst the increase in digital and the decline in print has been swift in the consumer channel, the trend in independent convenience is slower. It is a much more traditional sector and print is still very much a valuable platform used heavily by retailers. Where we see the digital landscape changing is the start of second-generation retailers who take-over stores from their parents, however we expect this to be very gradual. Ultimately, as always, a multi-platform approach for campaigns will always ensure that you're reaching the highest number of retailers on their preferred platform."

Charlotte Jesson, Newtrade

**Trade
magazine
sales down
4.8% (ABC
figures)**

**32% of
retailers
are going
more
digital***

**84% of
retailers still
read print
to stay
informed**

LINKEDIN PROVES A BIG HIT AND A GROWING OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS TO ENGAGE.

clarion
**TRADE
MATTERS**

Rebecca Wainwright, Head of Trade Engagement at Clarion Communications says:



“LinkedIn usage is on the rise amongst convenience retailers, connecting them with their peers, opinion makers and brand reps via a mix of open and closed forums. Feedback from our research cemented this trend.

“We’ve utilised this development to host retailer forums on behalf of brands. With the backing of well-regarded trade press, it has enabled our clients to authentically showcase thought leadership and the two-way communication can also provide valuable content for all-parties involved.”

Bobby Singh, BB Nevison Superstore and Post Office says:



“LinkedIn is brilliant... It’s a brilliant way of networking and connecting with leading brands out there, establishing a relationship and also showing what we’re doing in our stores as well.”

Justin Whittaker, Premier, Royton agreed:



“LinkedIn is becoming a great source of information and it’s one place to find all the different stories instead of just flicking through the various magazines.”

AS THE RETAILER E-COMMUNITY GROWS WE'RE SEEING 'C-FLUENCERS' EMERGE.



With social media usage on the rise amongst retailers, we are seeing **greater connections and more opportunity for peer-to-peer recommendation.** What's more, a growing number of **convenience retailers are reaching 'c-fluencer'** status.



"It's quite therapeutic for us retailers because it can get quite lonely out there. To get the feedback from other retailers on what they're doing and finding out we're all in the same boat, I come away from it feeling more energetic and more positive about things."



Twitter remains important, both as a source of information and a way to communicate with suppliers. One retailer said she was recently able to DM a supplier contact on Twitter, "...resolving a supply problem on a key line much more quickly than would have been possible through other, more traditional channels."

#wholesale / 11.6k followers

Incorporating this hashtag into relevant content can enable brands to extend reach to members of the wholesale industry

#retail / 339k followers

The hashtag can be filtered so that only the most relevant posts are shown - engaging with top posts can help position a brand as a thought-leader

#conveniencestore / 183 followers

Whilst the amount of followers of this hashtag is relatively low, the people who are engaging with it are very relevant such as c-fluencers

SO, WHAT CAN BRANDS TAKE FROM THIS WHEN IT COMES TO ENGAGING WITH RETAILERS?

1.

Digital and social media usage amongst retailers is growing and more c-fluencers are emerging, providing a growing opportunity for brands to engage

2.

Relationships are everything. Real-life commentary from field sales and insight teams to CEOs are well-received and can help to drive share of voice as well as point of difference vs. competitors

3.

Utilise the positive relationships already established by field sales teams to generate authentic 'teach and learn' content. Alternatively, utilise the well-regarded trade media to help form case studies, which, in turn, can be used for field sales – a win-win!

4.

Retailers still value the information they receive from trade media both on and offline and this provides brands with an opportunity to 'spread the word' in the absence of sales reps – maximise reach and engagement using a multi-channel approach

5.

To resonate, all communication should be backed up with quality research and relevant insight with 'what does this mean for the retailer?' in mind



EMERGING CONVENIENCE
RETAILER TRENDS +
HOW BRANDS CAN
MAKE AN IMPACT.

If you'd like to find out more including examples of how we engage the trade for some of the UK's biggest brands, please contact:

Lynn Louca

Managing Partner – Head of Growth

llouca@clarioncomms.co.uk

0789 444 2451



[@clarioncomms](https://www.instagram.com/clarioncomms)



[@ClarionComms](https://twitter.com/ClarionComms)



[@Clarion-Communications](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Clarion-Communications)