

Stretch out your summer sales

As warm weather continues into early autumn, the usual switch to seasonal stock can be delayed. Here's how you can guarantee boosted sales during an unpredictable window of prolonged sunshine

Warm spells that push on into late September and October are becoming a more regular feature of the UK retail calendar. When they do, the autumn shopper mission doesn't disappear, it simply gets squeezed into a shorter, later window. Until the weather changes, make the most of customers wanting to enjoy the last days of summer.

Autumn on hold

In the event of a longer summer season, customers carry on reaching for cold drinks, picnic items and barbecue food rather than soup and hot drinks, so switching your fixture over to autumn stock too early risks leaving customers disappointed.

Extended warm weather also brings more evening leisure trips, socialising outdoors, and eating and drinking on the go. For your store, this means higher late-day footfall and greater basket frequency for chilled drinks and snacks than you'd normally expect for this time of year.



Ice cream sales rise by around 8% for every extra degree increment

(Source: KamCity, Heatwave delivers much needed boost for convenience store sector, 01.06.26)



Click to read the April issue for guidance on how to build a bestselling barbecue range



However, as soon as the weather turns, there'll be a sharp shift in demand leaning towards hot drinks, bakery and meal-for-tonight solutions. The safest approach is to be reactive rather than committing to the changeover too soon. Keep your autumn range ready to go so you can immediately move it to shelves the moment temperatures drop.

Mission-led moments

A longer summer window is highly mission-based, so build your range and displays around the occasions your customers are shopping for, such as barbecues, chilled drinks, food to go and ice cream. The power of a well-built display can't be underestimated, so consider creating occasion-led displays such as 'barbecue ready' to help cross-sell and upsell categories.

For barbecue missions, retailers stocking local produce, such as burgers and sausages, can offer a

Own-label lines sell roughly three times faster than branded equivalents across categories during periods of hot weather

(Source: NIQ, Supermarket growth cools after end of May heatwave while World Cup fever drives surge in online and promotional spending, 23.06.26)

great point of difference while accessories including charcoal and firelighters will help you to become a destination for those last-minute barbecue occasions.

As the sun continues to shine into September, chilled visibility in store is important, so use secondary sitings near the till and store entrance, as well as the chiller. Products that perform the best are usually the most visible, and using

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eye-catching point of sale will help to drive that visibility further.

Ice cream continues to be a top seller when merchandised well. Keep an eye on your on-the-go stock since handheld singles alone make up 51% of ice cream sales¹. These are highly spontaneous and impulse-led purchases, so maintaining a clean, well-stocked chiller will reap rewards. Take a look at our **Focus On Ice Cream guide** to check you're stocking the bestsellers.

Share, share, share!

During an unpredictable stretch of weather, customer engagement becomes particularly valuable. Use your social media channels to send out messages to share updates and drive footfall. For example, if a hot day is on the way, post about your barbecue, chilled drinks and ice cream ranges to encourage customers to call in. Promotions are also worth leaning into, with spend on promotional activity having risen to 25% of total FMCG sales². After all, one well-timed offer can easily turn an impulse visit into a bigger basket.

Above all, your knowledge of your own community matters the most. A huge 80% of independent retailers were actively involved in their

Handheld singles make up **51%** of impulse ice cream sales, ahead of tubs (30%) and multipacks (19%)

(Source: Nielsen GB Total Impulse: MAT to 16.09.23)



community over the past year³ and that closeness means you're best-placed to understand exactly what your customers reach for on impulse at different times of the year. By staying reactive on range and switched on to what your community wants, you'll keep sales high for as long as the extended summer weather lasts.

(Sources: ¹Nielsen GB Total Impulse: MAT to 16.09.23; ²NIQ, Supermarket growth cools after end of May heatwave while World Cup fever drives surge in online and promotional spending, 23.06.26; ³ACS, Local Shop Report, 2024)



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