

Retail Round Up

February 2026



Retail Round Up-February



Retail Round Up February

Hello and welcome to our Retail Round-Up!

This newsletter brings you a curated collection of observations, news, and POS display photography from retail across UK. Our goal is to provide insightful support for our POS partnerships. We look forward to sharing more each month and actively welcome your feedback as we refine the format for future editions.

We hope you enjoy the read!

What's inside?

-  In-store photography
-  Insights and consumer trends
-  Brand and retail news
-  Innovation and sustainability

 = Displays produced by DS Smith

February- Retail news

Retail sales in the UK grew just 1.1% YOY in February, persistent wet weather weekends increased consumer spending.



The surge in weight-loss medications is affecting the sales of snacks and convenience foods.

Users spend an average of £91 weekly on groceries, down from £102 prior month.



15% of shoppers reporting they are cutting costs by opting for own label products, 16% selecting less expensive brands, and 18% shopping more at discounted stores.



On Valentine's Day, shoppers turned up the romance at home by indulging in upscale dining experiences, opting for meal deals priced at £10 or higher.



New research shows that product availability is now a key driver of customer loyalty, often more important than price.

44% of shoppers have switched to new supermarket in the past year.



Source: <https://www.talkingretail.com/news/industry-news/rise-of-weight-loss-drugs-hits-sales-of-snacks-and-convenience-foods-10-03-2026/> , <https://www.talkingretail.com/featured/home-romance-pancake-mix-and-online-shopping-shaped-february-grocery-sales-03-03-2026/> , <https://www.talkingretail.com/news/industry-news/convenience-stores-need-to-improve-product-availability-research-shows-02-03-2026/> , <https://www.talkingretail.com/news/industry-news/retail-sales-dampened-by-wet-february-10-03-2026/> , <https://retailtimes.co.uk/niq-shoppers-turn-to-private-label-and-dine-in-deals-during-event-filled-february-to-manage-spend/>

**What did Valentines
bring to the retail
landscape?**



Valentine's Day- In-Store activations



**POS excellence
in-store**





This is my kind of pit-stop!

Formula 1 has shifted gears as this month with Nestlé launching its KitKat global partnership across stores worldwide. What was once a pure sporting spectacle has evolved into a global marketing arena where brands compete not just for visibility, but for cultural relevance. And in retail environments, F1 activations are proving to be one of the most powerful tools in a brand manager's toolkit.

Today's shoppers, especially younger audiences, don't just watch F1—they live it! To them, F1 is a lifestyle content as much as it is sport. That makes it a magnet for shoppers' attention in-store. The real magic of F1 activations is the way they fuse product, story, and participation. Marketeers don't make it feel like advertising; they make the moment feel like part of the event itself.

When done well, an F1 activation becomes a touchpoint where fans step into the world they admire—right in the middle of their shopping journey.

F1 activations create disruptive moments that cut through retail noise, drive footfall, and elevate brand perception. They go beyond conventional sponsorship and unlock a new dimension of shopper engagement—one where brand, sport, and culture collide. This month, we have seen multiple KitKat SKUs form the basis of some incredible point of sale units. Everything from, full size F1 cars, mega displays in wholesale, miniature car toppers in convenience and upside-down FSDU cars leaving the pits to join the grocers.

For us at DS Smith, the goal was clear: bring the partnership off the circuit and into the store. Design teams have played a critical role here, crafting point-of-sale that is instantly legible—understood in a single second, with zero explanation needed. These are “holding moments” that stop shoppers, spark emotion, and pull campaign narratives into the real world.

I hope you enjoy seeing F1 brought to life – now it's your turn to hit full throttle!



Fran Harvey
Head of Creative &
Innovation Strategy

Nestlé - KitKat F1 POS Activation



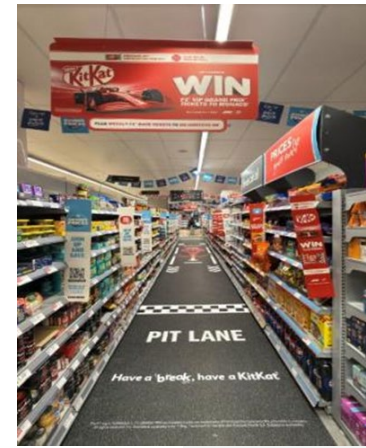
Instore



WOW Units



Grocer Article



Aisle takeover

Nestlé - KitKat F1 Behind the scenes



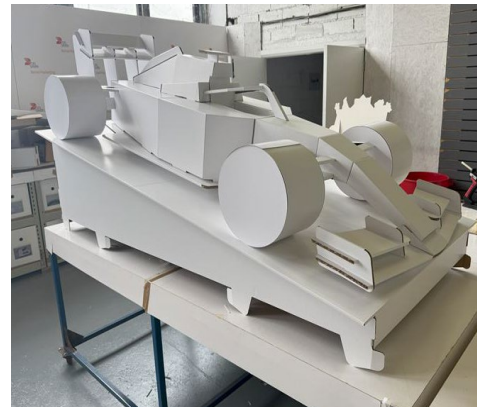
3D Renders



White Samples



First off production



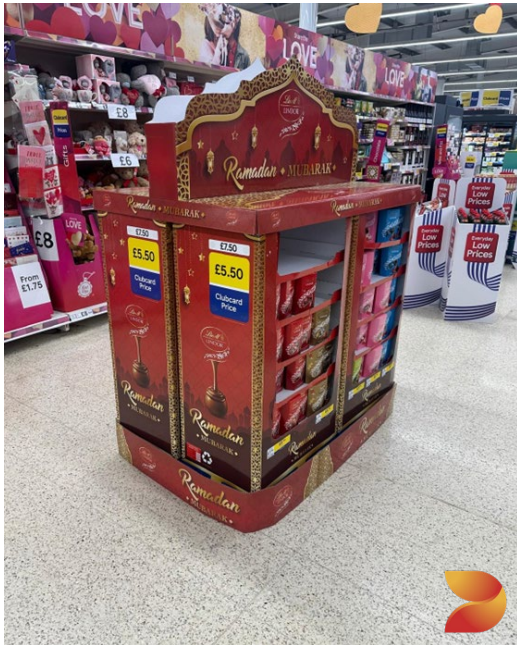
In-Store

Nestlé's F1 collaboration delivered high-impact in-store units brought to life through an end-to-end process; from design renders to structural development and final print—to elevate the shopper experience.



POS activations across the categories

Occasion-led Merchandising



TESCO LINDT

- Quad QP design
- Seasonal Ramadan
- 3D elements with bespoke topper



ASDA BONNE MAMAN

- QP display
- Seasonal - Pancake Day
- Structural support



SAINSBURYS IRN BRU

- Half Pallet – header lug-ons
- Seasonal Burns Night
- Recipe suggestions



Occasions Drive Structured Shopper Missions

Consumers enter stores with defined needs. Bulk buying for Ramadan meals or assembling a full pancake kit, boosting basket size and impulse buys

Wellness In-store



BOOTS PEPTOBISMOL

- Disruptive 3D shape display
- Educational info panel
- Colourful and creative elements



MORRISONS GAVISCON

- 4 shelf FSDU
- Product benefits
- SKU segmentation



SAINSBURYS NIVEA

- 360° unit
- Impactful 3D elements
- Multi- SKU



40% see wellness as essential to their beauty routine. Shown by a surge in performance-led and health-focused beauty categories.

Health is becoming inseparable from beauty.

Ambient Highlights



SAINSBURYS MULTIBRAND

- Stackable QP display
- SRP utilisation
- Multi SKU offer



SAINSBURYS TILDA

- Half pallet
- Impulse buy strategic placement
- Loyalty based price



MORRISONS OLD EL PASO

- QP Display
- Fully branded
- Occasion campaign led marketing



Turning Pantry Staples Into Impulse Wins

Strategically placed displays turn low-engagement staples into spontaneous purchases and moment led marketing opportunities.

In-Store Drinks Highlights



SAINSBURYS PEPSI

- WOW full pallet unit & 3D Elements
- Eye catching graphics with QR Code integration
- Competition Promo



SAINSBURYS STARBUCKS

- Quatre Pallet
- Flavour Segmentation
- Multi product offer



TESCO 1664

- Half Pallet
- Competition promotion
- Power of eye-catching primary pack



Drinks are powering profit in the UK market.

Even under cost-of-living pressure, consumers continue to protect everyday drink purchases — driving a surge in drink-only occasions

In-store confectionery highlights



SAINSBURYS MULTIBRAND

- In-aisle fixture display
- Cross-brand collaboration
- SRP utilisation



B&M CADBURY

- Hexagonal Dumpbin
- Fully Branded
- Stand out graphics



TESCO MAOAM

- 3 Shelf Hive
- High product volume
- Bold Colour



February saw a surge of **product innovation**, Easter season preparation, and **new flavour** launches across the UK confectionery retail market, leaning on strong **brand-led campaign** activity



Consumer, brand and retail news



Consumer, brand and retail news



HFSS Legislation

UK Legislation reducing the scope of marketing for high fat sugar and salt products could affect just 1% of total marketing spend.

Research suggests that due to loopholes in the rules limit its effectiveness. Online and television advertising are banned, but outdoor advertising, brand-owned social media accounts, websites and direct digital marketing are not included.

<https://www.grocerygazette.co.uk/2026/03/11/hfss-ad-restrictions-may-affect-just-1-per-cent-of-uk-food-marketing-spend-analysis-suggests/>



Drinks

Lipton Ice Tea brings out new flavour variant – Tropical.

Functional Soft drinks out grow low and no this dry January, growing at 28.5%, compared to 3.4% for No and low alcohol. Brands like CBD drink Trip (61% growth) and Britvic's new prebiotic soda product Poppi are making a splash in the drinks category.

<https://www.kamcity.com/namnews/products-promotions/lipton-iced-tea-rolling-out-new-tropical-variant/>
<https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/news/functional-soft-drinks-outshone-low-and-no-alcohol-in-dry-january-data-shows/716275.article>



Snacking

Solero Bon Bon, Magnum Bon Bon, Calippo and Cornetto ranges, as well as a Wall's ice cream stick in partnership with Minecraft

Pepperami pairs up with PepsiCo's Doritos for BBQ sweet tang flavour meat snack to attract young adult shoppers. The launch will be supported by a £3.5m media campaign across social, digital, connected TV, influencer strategy and shopper marketing throughout 2026.

<https://www.betterretailing.com/br/product-news/peperami-launches-new-flavour-collab-with-doritos/>

<https://www.betterretailing.com/br/product-news/exclusive-the-magnum-ice-cream-company-launches-new-cornetto-solero-and-minecraft-lines/>

A woman with a brown backpack is pushing a shopping cart filled with groceries through a well-stocked supermarket aisle. The shelves are filled with various products, and the ceiling has a green decorative pattern. A white graphic element, resembling a stylized speech bubble or a bracket, is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Building brand trust

Retaining your customer loyalty

Turning customer trust into your competitive edge



Consistency

Customers trust is based on delivering right, every time – your retail activation is the first touchpoint in your shoppers journey



Evolve

Trusted brand grow with their customers. As trends become healthier and expectations of sustainability expand, are you keeping up?



Heritage and utility

Heritage gives brands real stories to tell: how they started, what they stand for, and how they've stayed true to their values. Tap into your shoppers nostalgia, remind them you are a safe choice



Reliability

Where do your products show up in routines? Is it breakfast, or packed lunches? Make your point of sale clear as to why your product can be trusted for everyday use.



ROI of trust

With global uncertainty at a high, and food inflation declining slowly (4.2% forecast to drop to 3.8% in 2026) you need to make customers trust your brand. Earning their trust will pay you back long term.



Communication

Clear signs, pricing, directions, and product information help customers navigate easily. When shoppers don't feel confused or lost, they associate the brand with reliability and professionalism



Health Boom

Shaking up the retail environment

What's driving our focus on health?



900% growth of GLP-1 treatments in the UK since 2020.



2/3rd of shoppers say they buy functional food weekly, driven by a better understanding of nutrition and connection between diet and health.



70% of consumers worldwide agree they proactively aim to manage their health.

“

The data coming out of the US is now hard to ignore. Appetite-suppressing drugs are giving people, for the first time in history, a genuine choice about what weight they are. And they are choosing not to be obese or overweight”

Henry Dimbleby
12.03.26

Key Takeaways for Retailers

The idea of food as medicine grows with a holistic approach to health.



NPD Responding to GLP-1 growth, smaller portions with more nutrient dense ingredients.

Review your customer demographic. Understand how cultures and trends are impacting buying habits.

Rise of “fibre maxxing” as the next trending health focus – **on pack “high fibre” claims** growth 5.4% CAGR.

Communicate the benefits of products with:

- icons
- simple text
- Colour differentiation
- digital content

Willingness to pay for health outcomes: 47% spend more cognitive benefits, 26% for increased energy.





POS Display

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We can help you with deeper customer insights, smarter innovations and sustainable POS solutions, all deployed with speed, agility and scale. [Contact us](#) about your next campaign today.



Innovation

[Innovation at DS Smith](#)

Our innovation strategy is based on delivering our objectives on the immediate, medium and long-term horizon. We are investing globally in our people, plants and our partner ecosystem. [Contact us](#) about how we can innovate for now and for next.

Talk to one of our experts to find out more



Packaging

[DS Smith Packaging solutions](#)

We help stores increase efficiency, boost turnover and reduce costs. [Contact us](#) to connect with industry leading packaging strategists.



Sustainability

[DS Smith Sustainability](#)

Our circular business model is built around sustainability, and we are leading the way towards a low-carbon, circular economy.

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Thank



You

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