



EMEA Retail Round-Up

Summer 2026

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Hello and welcome to our Summer 2026 Retail Round-Up

This summer, the World Cup created a major opportunity for brands to connect with shoppers through standout in-store activation.

We also look at the FMCG trends that shaped summer, alongside examples from confectionery and pet food.

As we move into Autumn, we highlight the shopper trends set to influence the season ahead.

Enjoy the read!

Summer 2026: Health, refreshment and value drive FMCG growth

Fastest-growing categories in European grocery vs. Summer 2025

TOP FMCG CATEGORIES BY GROWTH (%)		
	Vinaigrettes (Dressings)	+13.7%
	Nuts Mix	+13.5%
	Ice Creams & Sorbets	+13.0%
	Energy Drinks	+12.8%
	Salads (Fresh & RTE)	+12.7%
	Water	~+10% volume growth
	Soft Drinks & Functional Beverages	STRONG GROWTH



Health & Wellness shapes the basket

Fresh, protein-rich and functional choices continue to outperform.



Refreshment wins in warmer weather

Water, ice cream and cold beverages create strong seasonal activation opportunities.



Value remains front of mind

40% of European grocery sales are now private label. Increasing pressure on brands to demonstrate value & differentiation.



Functionality is becoming mainstream

Energy, functional and alcohol-free drinks are moving beyond niche occasions.

Fresh | Healthy | Functional | Refreshing | Value-led

World Cup 2026: Turning fan engagement into retail opportunity

Trust is the new currency

Consumers increasingly trust authentic voices over traditional brand advertising.

Retail opportunity

Use creators, local voices and authentic experiences to bring campaigns to life.

Always-on engagement

Fan engagement starts long before kick-off and continues beyond the tournament.

Retail opportunity

Connect social, digital and in-store activity across the whole campaign journey.

Discovery drives demand

Shoppers respond to products and experiences worth discovering and sharing.

Retail opportunity

Use exclusives, limited editions, sampling and standout displays to create discovery.

Emotion beats features

Sport creates powerful shared moments that brands can tap into.

Retail opportunity

Sell the occasion and experience - not simply the product.

Display activity this summer

This season's European store checks highlight two key areas of activity.

- Occasion-led activation: World Cup 2026
- Category-led activation: Sweets & Pet food

World Cup 2026: Activation Across Europe

World Cup activation went beyond product display.

In-store activity used scale, theatre and interaction to turn shopper attention into engagement.

Scale, theatre and interaction.



 = Display produced by DS Smith



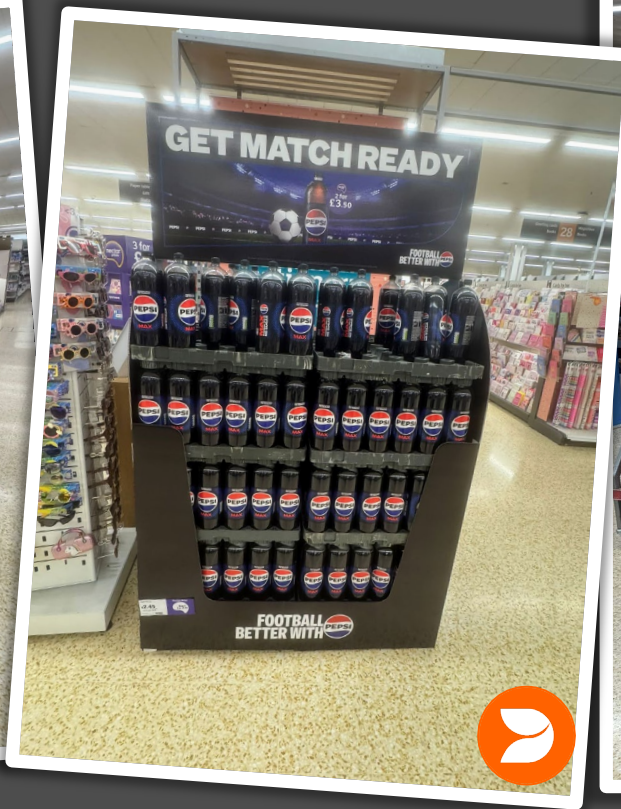
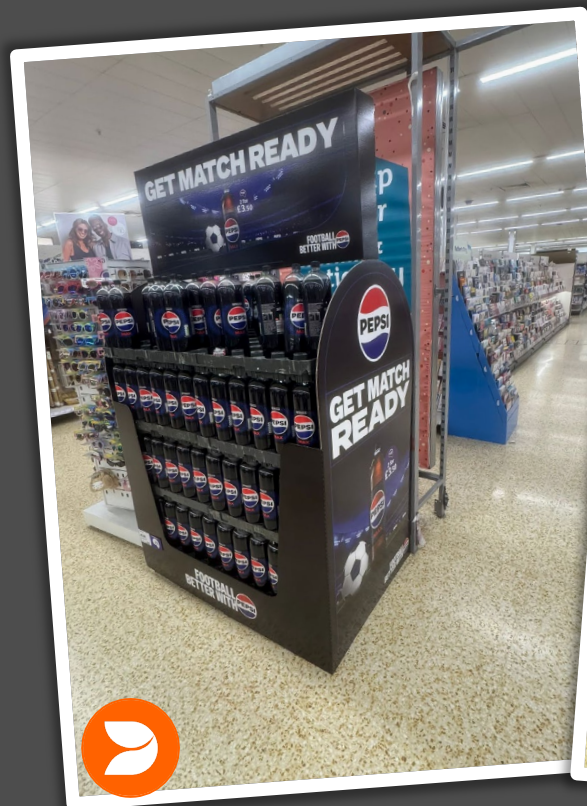
World Cup 2026: From visibility to immersive theatre

Activation flexed from product visibility to immersive theatre.

Pallet displays delivered scalable impact, while larger installations created destination-style experiences in-store.

Scalable, impactful and immersive.

 = Display produced by DS Smith



PepsiCo | Sainsbury's



 DS
Smith

World Cup 2026: One occasion, multiple activation strategies

Football created a flexible platform for activation.

Brands used the same sporting occasion to drive visibility, promotion and shopper engagement across categories and markets.

Visibility, promotion and engagement.

 = Display produced by DS Smith



Coca Cola | Hyper U

Loteria | Carrefour



Granini | Eckes

Summer 2026: Sweets & Pet food create standout opportunities

Bold formats drove visibility beyond seasonal events.

Across confectionery and pet food, brands used bold, distinctive display formats to create stopping power in-store.

Bold, distinctive and shoppable.

 = Display produced by DS Smith

Kent



Edeka 

Mars | Pets at home



Mars | Sainsbury's 



Autumn consumer trends

Autumn 2026: Value, wellbeing and comfort shape shopper choices

Four retail trends influencing FMCG this autumn



Functional for everyday wellbeing

Consumers increasingly prioritise food and drink supporting energy, immunity, sleep and mental wellbeing.

Retail opportunity

Build functional benefits into everyday routines and occasions.



Value remains critical

Cost-of-living pressures keep affordability high on the shopper agenda - without compromising on quality.

Retail opportunity

Use price-locks, multipacks and larger formats to create value.



Comfort & seasonality create occasions

Seasonal flavours, comfort food and limited editions become more relevant as routines shift into autumn.

Retail opportunity

Create seasonal products and distinctive in-store experiences.



Sustainability needs to be tangible

Shoppers increasingly expect practical, transparent environment action.

Retail opportunity

Make recycling, refill circularity & waste reduction easy to understand.

Wellbeing | Value | Comfort | Circularity

Invitation

Is your packaging working as hard as your products?

For **beauty, personal and home care brands**, packaging needs to do more than protect products. It needs to perform across different routes to market, stand out at the point of sale, support efficient operations and adapt to changing consumer expectations.

Join our upcoming **DS Smith Packaging Webinar** to discover what's making the difference.

 Date: **Thursday 8th October 2026**

 Time: **10:00 UK / 11:00 CET / 12:00 EET**

 Location: **Online** — with on-demand access after the event

Register now and receive the **new DS Smith packaging report***, featuring findings from our in-store packaging audit on protection, brand visibility, retail readiness and more, alongside practical questions to help you reflect on your own packaging strategy.

What you'll see:

-  Packaging innovations designed to improve product protection and supply chain efficiency.
-  New opportunities for brand differentiation through shelf-ready packaging and POS displays.
-  How to balance protection, performance and readiness for both retail and e-commerce.
-  Market trends, real examples, and expert perspectives

It's a practical session with direct input from DS Smith packaging experts and industry leaders, followed by an **open discussion** and **live Q&A**.

P.S. Can't make the date? Register anyway and we'll send you the on-demand link so you can watch whenever suits you.

We look forward to seeing you there!

The DS Smith Team

**DS Smith Market Study conducted in Poland*




**Delivering Better
Packaging Solutions
for Beauty, Personal
and Home Care**

Stronger brand performance.
Driving efficiency.
Better supply chain resilience.

 **October 8th, 2026, 11:00 CET**

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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.



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our experts to
find out more

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.



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.

Download our latest report [here](#)





Thank You

Danke Dankjewel Благодаря 谢谢 Hvala Děkuji Tak Aitäh Kiitos Merci Ευχαριστώ
Köszönöm Grazie Paldies Ačiū Ви благодарам شكرالكم Dziękuję Obrigado Mulțumesc
Ďakujem Gracías Tack ขอบคุณ Teşekkür ederim

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