



RETAIL GAZETTE

Forward Features 2021

2021 Features Schedule

January

LOOKING AHEAD: 2021

- What can retailers expect in 2021?
- Will the shocking year UK retail endured in 2020 have a chance at recovery?
- What issues/topics might we expect to dominate retail news this year?
- Any trends or issues from last year expected to continue in 2021?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Monday, January 4*

○ *Story to be published w/c January 4*

February

ARE WE WITNESSING THE END OF RETAIL EMPIRES?

- 2020 saw the collapse of Arcadia Group, Oasis & Warehouse, Intu, Edinburgh Woollen Mill Group & Debenhams. What knock-on effect will this have on UK retail?
- Should other retail empires – such as Frasers Group, JD Sports plc, John Lewis Partnership, AB Foods and any of the Big 4 grocers – re-think their expansion strategies in light of Covid? Why/why not?
- What will the downfall of retail empires mean for corporate governance and ethics around workers' rights?
- Should retailers strive for quality (less than 5 stores in strategic locations) or quantity (stores in every major city/region, full-flung chain)? What are the pros and cons for both?
- Will smaller, independent and/or non-chain retail businesses be the future? Why and how?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, February 19*

○ *Story to be published w/c February 22*

March

CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITY POST-COVID

- 2020 saw the cancellation of Ramadan, Diwali, Easter, Yom Kippur, Christmas, Chinese New Year events. How can retailers learn from and capitalise on this for 2021?
- Do UK retailers stand to benefit from celebrating more of the country's religious and cultural diversity – not just Easter and Christmas? Why/why not?
- How can retailers take advantage of being more inclusive of all religions and cultures, without making it look like a tokenistic gesture or a blatant cash-grab?
- Should retailers consider bespoke marketing and/or visual merchandising campaigns for individual stores depending on local demographics, rather than a generic campaign as they do for Christmas? Why/why not?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, March 19*

○ *Story to be published w/c March 22*

April

IS 2021 THE YEAR OF THE IPO?

- In recent months, UK retail has seen Moonpig & Dr Martens launch IPO proceedings, and while The Hut Group entered the stock market. Is a post-Covid retail market ripe for IPOs? Why/why not?
- Will we see more pureplay online retailers launching on the stock market after their successes during the pandemic? Why/why not?
- What are the pros and cons, and/or risks and benefits, of a retailer going public?
- What's the best practice for retailers to decide which stock market to trade on? (AIM vs LSE, UK vs US, etc)

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, April 23*

○ *Story to be published w/c April 26*

May

THE RISE AND RISE OF CONVENIENCE/OFF-LICENCE STORES

- 2020 was a good year for convenience and off-licence stores thanks to the pandemic. What does the future of the sector hold?
- What are the pros and cons of having more convenience and off-licence stores on local high streets?
- How can they address lack of product range and choices that large-store supermarkets enjoy?
- Convenience and off-licence stores are generally the same in look and feel. Should they consider unique in-store customer experiences? Why/why not?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, May 21*

○ *Story to be published w/c May 24*

June

BREXIT: SIX MONTHS ON

- It's been 6 months since the Brexit transition period ended and UK officially left the single market & customs union. How has UK retail been impacted by it, so far?
- Which retailers were well-prepared for the outcome of the deal and how are they faring now?
- Which retailers were ill-prepared and how are they faring now?
- How has import/export and border checks fared since Brexit and in what ways has this impacted UK retail?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, June 18*

○ *Story to be published w/c June 21*

July

HOW CAN THE BEAUTY RETAIL MARKET MAKE A COMEBACK POST-COVID?

- GlobalData says the UK beauty retail sector will see a £1.7bn value decline in 2020. How has the sector performed so far this year?

- How can it return to growth this year if Covid continues to lead to store closures and more working from home?
- Are customers more likely to buy online or would they prefer doing testers in stores? Why/why not?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, July 23*

○ *Story to be published w/c July 26*

August

HAS COVID AFFECTED THE FUTURE OF GROCERY SECTOR FOREVER?

- The pandemic has resulted in a huge shift to online shopping, both for ease and safety. How are grocers coping with online consumer demand so far this year?
- Customers now expect online grocery orders in a matter of minutes – rather than wait 24 or 48 hours. Which grocers are striving to accommodate this, and how are they doing it? What are the pros and cons?
- With shortages of toilet paper, flour, and other essentials – particularly during the early stages of lockdown – the local corner shop became the unsung heroes of the pandemic. How will this demand continue for smaller businesses when the pandemic subsides?

○ *Deadline for quotes: Friday, August 20*

○ *Story to be published w/c August 22*

September

DEPARTMENT STORES IN 2021

- Department stores had yet another horrid year in 2020, especially with the collapse of Debenhams & Beales. How are is the sector faring so far this year?
- What are the issues that still need to be addressed to remain relevant and keep this UK heritage alive, especially in the wake of Covid?
- John Lewis is looking to downsize its stores or convert some space to offices. Are we witnessing the end to department store chains? Why/why not?

- What about demand for luxury department stores? Will Mike Ashley's rollout of the Frasers concept work outside London, where Harrods, Selfridges, Fortnum & Mason and Liberty thrive thanks to tourism?
- *Deadline for quotes: Friday, September 17*
- *Story to be published w/c September 20*

October

SINGLES DAY & BLACK FRIDAY

- Singles Day & Black Friday 2020 were huge, given the bumper year for online retail amid the Covid-19 pandemic. What can we expect for 2021?
- Why are more and more UK retailers drawing a line through Black Friday sales?
- Looking at the consistent successes of Chinese retailers on Singles Day, what can UK retailers learn?
- Do extended discount periods leading up to and after Singles Day & Black Friday make any difference? Why/why not?
- *Deadline for quotes: Friday, October 22*
- *Story to be published w/c October 25*

November

CHRISTMAS ADVERTS

- An overview of the 2021 adverts from UK retailers
- Which retailers stood out and why?
- Why is the UK retail industry obsessed with Christmas advertising campaigns?
- Does investing millions in TV adverts actually boost Christmas sales?
- Are there any lessons from (pandemic) Christmas 2020 that retailers should be aware of?
- *Deadline for quotes: Friday, November 19*
- *Story to be published w/c November 22*

December

THE YEAR THAT WAS

- A look at the key themes, issues and news stories that dominated UK retail in 2021
 - Why did they dominate the news cycle?
 - What effects – if any – did they have on UK retail?
- *Deadline for quotes: Friday, December 10*
- *Story to be published w/c December 13*

NOTES:

- The *Retail Gazette* is an online-only publication. However, deadlines are strict and non-negotiable.
- The *Retail Gazette* is only seeking quotes in response to the points/questions posed in each monthly topic.
- Due to the nature of retail's fast-paced news cycle, *Retail Gazette* will only consider submissions from the 1st day of each month and for the topic pertaining to that month.
- Submissions months in advance will not be considered.
- Submissions must be in the form of quotes, with a strict maximum of 350 words.
- Additional quotes that do not necessarily respond to the questions are welcome, however it must still relate to the topic in general and must still be within the word limit mentioned above.
- Submissions of quotes are open to anyone. Those that come from direct-to-consumer retailers are given special priority.
- Please note that *Retail Gazette* is always inundated with emails and therefore we can never respond to each request nor can we guarantee to publish each submission.
- Commentary bylines and/or opinion pieces for each monthly topic are welcome, provided the author works for a direct-to-consumer retailer, a shopping centre, a retail lobby group/business chamber (eg: the BRC), or is a retail/finance academic associated with a university. Word count: 600-800.
- Commentary bylines or opinion pieces written by a supplier, consultant, lawyer or any other business that works with retailers, will only be considered for publication if it's part of a wider marketing campaign with the *Retail Gazette*.
- The *Retail Gazette* reserves the right to edit submissions, reject them or select what would be appropriate for the feature in question.

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