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The Grocer Guide to...

The
Grocer

Franchise & fascia



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Increased competition from the multiple retailers in the convenience sector and the cost-of-living crisis have made the past year challenging for franchise and fascia groups. However, each one is intent on making its mark with new recruits and retaining the loyalty of its existing retailers. And all are relishing the summer of sport ahead		Revealing how retailer relationships are the bedrock of its success	
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Analysis

Strategic players



Convenience groups continue to draw on tempting packages and improved technology to woo members, and competition is as fierce as ever

Following a challenging year, convenience retailers remain relatively upbeat about their performance. Amid a cost-of-living crisis, own-brand lines have proved increasingly popular for this cohort, as consumers seek value for money, while improved food-to-go and fresh & chilled sectors continue to resonate with shoppers.

However, several of the franchise and symbol businesses are only too aware of the growing threat from the multiples stepping into the convenience territory and the added competition that this brings to the sector, while the ongoing rivalry between the traditional set of convenience retailers is as fierce as ever, with many claiming to have won the loyalty of independents from their counterparts in the category.

With a collective retail turnover of around £3.6bn, Spar has seen an increase of 8% over the previous year, according to retail and brand development director Ian Taylor. “This is before any turnover from fuel or any income from services, such as PayPoint, Lottery or Post Office are added in,” he notes. In the last 12 months, 260 stores have opened with Spar above the door, he says. “And the quality has continued to improve, with bigger, better stores with higher sales densities. In the last 12 months, our average wholesale sales per store have increased by 10% and our retail sales per square foot have increased by 6%. Higher sales per delivery or higher sales per square foot translates into higher profits throughout the supply chain.”

However, the independent

convenience sector depends on excellent retailing standards, he notes, adding that Spar’s continued growth is attributable to a number of clearly defined factors, including tailored store formats with unique retail solutions and customer propositions being matched to specific store locations.

Bestway Retail also reports a positive year, with over 220 new accounts opening within the group, plus 95 change of ownership accounts being progressed with new operators, says retail director Jamie Davison. “The year ahead will continue to be challenging due to rising costs and increased competition from the multiples, but we are confident in our symbol offers [best-one, Costcutter and Bargain Booze], working proactively with existing and new retailers.”

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For Booker Group, its fascias [Premier, Budgens and Londis] continue to evolve, reports the company. Premier stores have increased to over 4,500 and it expects to see that number grow over the next 12 months “as independent retailers look for ways to save money and increase profits while providing a better experience for their shoppers”, it says.

Meanwhile, 65 new retailers have joined Budgens, with the estate now numbering over 425 members, while Londis has recruited almost 200 retailers over the past year, to now number more than 2,400 members – with almost three-quarters of the recruits coming from other symbol brands, it adds.

At Parfett's, customer development manager John O'Neill says its employee-ownership model continues to attract independent retailers to the Go Local symbol group, comprising Go Local, Go Local Extra and The Local for off-licence-focused retailers. As such, the Go Local network now includes 1,300 stores in the North, Midlands and expanding further south to Gloucestershire, with the opening of a new depot in Birmingham facilitating that extension.

John Miller, head of franchise – operations at One Stop, also reports strong recruitment and interest from retailers in joining the franchise business. “We are looking for the right retailer, right store in a market that remains strong,” he says. “We have a robust strategy that supports ambitious growth of the franchise business.”

Own-brands rival branded options

With the cost-of-living pressures, it is inevitable to see consumers seeking quality alternatives to branded goods, and Bestway Retail has reacted to deliver a credible range that offers affordable quality, says Davison. The business' new Best-in range – which is available across its customer base, regardless of the fascia – keeps in mind three core principles and measurements: Best-in margin, Best-in value and Best-in quality, he explains. The range offers retailers margins of minimum 30% to 75%, with “unbeatable and exceptional price points for retailers to pass on to their shoppers”. One example, he cites, is its canned iced coffees with an 85p PMP offering.



The Best-in range offers over 160 new products covering key ambient grocery categories, including impulse and core grocery, adds Davison. These include biscuits made in Manchester from a company with over 150 years of traditional baking history, and Italian pasta made with 100% durum wheat.

“The Best-in own-label is created as a value proposition for consumers in the spaces where price is creating an opt-out or they cannot afford to buy a branded products as there is no cheaper alternative to brand – for example, bleach,” notes Davison. “We want to create options to keep shoppers buying in and maintain overall category sales by offering alternatives.”

At One Stop, Miller says strong promotional pricing is a key factor in customers' purchase considerations and is also a key driver for supporting basket volume while also helping customers to manage the total cost of their top-up shopping. “Our range

proposition is continually evolving to match customers' needs for both innovation and variation, also ensuring clear tiered pricing to include entry level and own-brand products across all categories,” he says.

At Spar, the own-brand range has an annual retail sales value estimated to be more than £400m and comprises more than 750 lines across ambient grocery, chilled, frozen and licensed categories, reveals Taylor. Spar Brand is one of the retailer's most prized assets and is driving sales and profits in its stores, he adds. “It's our secret weapon to differentiate ourselves with our customer offer, driving shoppers' satisfaction, spend and loyalty.”

Including a mix of internationally sourced products and nationally sourced products available for all regions, as well as locally sourced products to add provenance and regional expertise, helps Spar Brand demonstrate its passion for local, he

New concepts and opportunities

Given the level of competition in the franchise & fascia market, groups are only too aware that they need to keep one step ahead of the competition to attract new independent retailers and win the ongoing loyalty of shoppers.

Premier is trialling a new consumer loyalty scheme, designed to not only earn consumers points to get money off their shop, but also allowing retailers to collect points for their community, meaning everyone benefits, it says. In addition, in the last 12 months, the fascia has launched several crime prevention initiatives to support retailers in cracking down on

crime, ranging from body cameras to facial recognition software.

Meanwhile, the retailer's new 'Soft Drinks Cave' is a dedicated walk-in refrigeration unit, which it says helps to drive footfall as well as reduce the cost of energy.

At Londis, the past year saw it launch its Store of the Future, showcasing all of its latest thinking, including digital screens, a new-look point of sale, a beer cave and merchandising efficiencies throughout the store.

Parfett's has developed dedicated 'Beer Caves' to help create a focus in-store for beers and wines. "The concept was

trialled in The Local stores, and is gaining popularity across the Go Local network. The concept not only provides a great shopping experience, but also enhances security in-store," says O'Neill.

Meanwhile, One Stop has launched a revised beer, wine, cider and ready-to-drink range, with 38 new lines across the beer, cider, cocktail, RTD and low- and no- categories, says Miller. "One Stop's alcohol overhaul is a conscious reaction to feedback from customers across our estate, wanting to see a wider selection of craft and ale beers and low- and no-alcohol options," he says. "For

ultimate convenience and immediate consumption, we have increased our variety of chilled multipack products. Customers can now enjoy new lines such as Kopparberg Strawberry & Pineapple 330ml 4pk, Peroni Nastro Azzurro, 440ml 4pk and many more.

Over the past year, Budgens has been working on its look and feel to bring it up to date, as well as delivering a number of exclusive deals on crime prevention solutions to help retailers. It is also trialling loyalty for consumers and retailers and hopes to continue to develop that within the coming months.

says. In many stores the Spar own-brand version of a product is the best-seller, he notes, as the business subjects these products to a thorough and intensive development process, which includes collaboration with major manufacturers and benchmarking the product quality against leading branded and competitor own-label lines.

2023 was a busy year for Spar, with over products redesigned and 60 new lines introduced, including the addition of new international ranges, he notes. "We had price-fighting launches with our Spar Custard and Rice Pudding, as well as expansions on hero categories, like ready meals and spirits. And we had quality leaders in cake, and meal occasion winners in meals and breads."

This year, the company has already launched 24 new lines, including its Spar Brand Bread, and has seven new summer meat products launching, including a Cheddar Cheeseburger and Salt & Chilli Pork Belly slices.

With the cost-of-living crisis continuing, many consumers are still feeling the pinch as inflation falls, says Parfett's O'Neill. "So it's essential for retailers to provide value across key lines. Parfett's own-label range plays a key part in its strategy of optimising margins for retailers, and it continues to expand the range, which will see 200 lines by the end of 2024. "New lines are chosen after careful consideration of sales data to ensure retailers have an own-label option on key lines that offer industry-leading margins," he says. Successful launches have ranged from impulse categories to household products, such as soft drinks, energy drinks, wine, snacks and pet foods, and O'Neill says the company is working hard to keep this trajectory going.

While Premier has seen greater emphasis on driving value through its own-label brands – Jack's and Euro Shopper – and consumer promotions over the past year, the retailer believes

it is important to have a mix of own-brand and branded products in-store. It adopts a 'good, better, best' approach, with a convenience range that "covers all need states", it says. However, its own-label brands continue to grow and "help our retailers provide value for their consumers as well as offering them a great POR", it notes.

Budgens, meanwhile, reports double-digit growth for the Euro Shopper and Jack's own-label ranges, and the retailer has added further lines to these throughout the past year. "Adding the right products to own-brand ranges is key to developing the offer, especially where there is a gap in the range," it says. "Maintaining customer loyalty is more about maintaining availability and strong RSPs. At Budgens, we don't just drive own-brand, we also drive our branded partners hard as well, with strong promotions and PORs for our retailers."

Booker Group's Londis has also

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added extra SKUs to the Jack's range and monitors the market closely to see what new products it can bring to the table. "We're always looking to develop our own-brand, monitoring WSPs and RSPs to ensure they offer the best possible value to shoppers and strong margins for our retailers," it says.

Growing strength of food-to-go

The UK food-to-go market is forecast to grow by 3.5% and reach a value of £23bn in 2024¹, outpacing its pre-pandemic value by +9.3%, reveals Bestway Retail's Davison. However, penetration in the food-to-go market increased by only 1.1ppt to 17.7% against the total market's +2.6ppt rise to 55.3%, he notes. "Stagnant frequency highlights that consumers were having to prioritise and be more selective over which occasions they opted to spend on food and drink out of home," he says.

Bestway has developed its Grab & Go food-to-go brand, housed in a modular display unit, with dedicated ranges to include premium coffee, soft drinks and shakes, and baked goods, to name a few. The modular unit can be scaled up or down to suit the requirements of the store or shopper type. "We work very closely with specialist direct-to-store suppliers and are always looking to introduce new news, be it via vending machine options or an over-the-counter serve offer," he says.

Premier has recently launched its 'Mega Meal Deal' lunchtime proposition, with shoppers able to buy five items for £5.50, including a main, drink, chilled snack, chocolate and crisps, saving over £2, it reveals. "We have continued to develop our popular 'Refresh' food/drink on-the-go area with the introduction of milkshake and bubble tea machines, which are proving to be very popular while making some retailers over £2k extra profit a week," it adds.

Thirty new lines have also become part of One Stop's lunchtime meal deal since the introduction of over 140 brand new fresh products into its range since October 2023, reveals Miller. "Research has shown us that customers are looking for both healthier and fresher options, so catering to those changing needs is vital," he says. "Our lunchtime meal deal is now enriched with a number of high-protein options, including One Stop Egg Protein Pot 90g, Arla Protein Strawberry Yogurt Pouch



200g, and Taste Original Chicken Satay Skewers 40g. These changes have been a huge success with our customers, with feedback such as 'The meal deals are great value and always fresh'. With customers, particularly families, looking for quick meal solutions, we will soon be launching a revised range within our frozen meal deal."

With nearly £100m invested across its estate last year and with plans to do the same this year, one of Spar's key areas of innovation has been in food-to-go, says Taylor. "We have a number of solutions to deliver this grab-and-go mission across the Spar family – whether that's in larger format stores like Spar Mallusk in Northern Ireland, which delivers superb multiple food-to-go options for the customer, with the latest touchscreen ordering, or modular food-to-go in Spar Scotland stores that incorporates the products within the counter, using local brands and driving efficiency across the store.

"Food-to-go is a crucial driver of footfall in the right stores," he adds. "As consumer lifestyles become increasingly fast-paced, the demand for convenient, high-quality food-to-go options has increased. This trend is a significant opportunity for Spar retailers to attract more customers and enhance their overall shopping experience. It also encourages repeat visits and increases basket spend."

Impulse and food-to-go ranges continue to strengthen at Parfett's, reveals O'Neill, particularly with innovations such as Tango Ice Blast, slushes and milkshakes, which play well in convenience – arguably more so than any other retail location. "We think carefully about how to promote food-to-go in-store, with clear promotions to attract shoppers," he says.

Development of home delivery

As the home delivery market continues to expand, it presents exciting



Investing in technology

In-store technology is an area where Spar has made a huge investment, says Taylor. “We have introduced electronic shelf edge labels (ESELs), digital screens, VARS and AI cameras. We have increased the number of stores using self-checkouts and cash management systems, and we will continue to invest in new technologies. It helps our retailers to stay competitive in today’s market and it can significantly enhance both operational efficiency and customer experience.

Bestway Retail is continuing to review and develop EPOS functionality, ESELs, age verification, and infrastructure

to make working with the broader business easier, says Davison. “We are also investing in our web development to make the shopper journey and path to purchase easier and quicker.”

Parfett’s has invested heavily in gradually moving away from its desktop online system by developing an app. O’Neill explains: “This provides our retailers with all the flexibility and information they need, reflecting the busy day-to-day routine of a successful independent retailer.”

For Premier, automatic free enrolment to search engine optimisation (SEO) company Xext is supporting

retailers in being more visible online and driving footfall to stores, it says. “With opening hours, in-store services and store photographs, Xext is supporting all Premier retailers in appearing higher in search rankings,” it adds. The business has also introduced ESELs, with trials showing that, on average, they save retailers 14 hours of labour per week, equating to cost savings of £7k a year.

This year, One Stop launched an AI-driven waste app, which has reduced markdown and wastage across all stores, reveals Miller. The company also recently launched a new order app, so that franchisees

can review and amend orders from anywhere. “We gave 65 handheld terminals to our busiest franchise and online stores, and we have also updated our retailer hub ‘MyStop’ to provide helpful information, continuous communication and an improved look and feel,” he notes.

Both Londis and Budgens report they are investing “record amounts” into technology to ensure their businesses are fit for the future. Each has also brokered exclusive details with a number of ESEL companies, with reduced charges, interest-free credit and extended warranties.

opportunities to innovate and adapt, says Spar’s Taylor. “The future of home delivery is interesting, and by stores investing in a robust delivery infrastructure and enhancing the customer experience, there is a definite commitment to meeting the growing demand in this dynamic and rapidly evolving market.”

Spar has online delivery partners to enable its retailers to have another channel to market, he says. In addition to Snappy Shopper, and other home delivery services, it partners with Deliveroo and Just Eat. “These are being rolled out and we look forward to seeing how it grows.”

Delivery is becoming more important to retailers, says Parfett’s. “It’s important for us to get the balance right, so that’s why we offer depot-exclusive deals, often totally different from the online offering, and we find this keeps a nice balance of in-store visits and deliveries. Most of our

wholesale customers are ‘hybrid’ customers who like to take advantage of our free delivered service but combine that with exclusive depot deals they can’t get anywhere else. These deals have proved to be a significant incentive for retaining and boosting depot footfall.”

Online is a huge part of One Stop’s business, says Miller. “Last year, across the three aggregators – Deliveroo, Just Eats and Uber Eats, we saw sales of over £73m,” he says. “We are currently integrating Snappy Shopper and will soon be launching one easy-to-use handheld terminal that supports all of these aggregators. We have 640 company stores and 157 franchise stores which currently offer an online proposition to customers. Our online offering features over 3,000 SKUs and, alongside this, we run regular promotions and activity with the aggregators, which continue to entice customers and drive loyalty.”

Summer opportunity

With summer finally here, Premier has a promotional package to drive sales and footfall across beer, wines and spirits, fresh BBQ products and sharing soft drinks and snacks during sunnier days and the Euros tournament. Meanwhile, Londis says that, across the summer, it will have its best-ever promotions to drive footfall throughout the season.

Parfett’s is also taking the summer of sport into consideration, saying this presents a wide range of opportunities and product ranges that lend themselves well to al fresco dining, with summer barbecues a major sales opportunity. Snacking, soft drinks, sharing packs, chilled beer and wine will all perform well over the coming trading period, it says. “Chilled soft drinks are a key line, with energy continuing to show incredible growth, which is one of the reasons we have developed our Zenergy Power 500ml

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cans range. With a PMP of 89p, it offers great value, high margins and a quality alternative to the big brands.

At One Stop, its Summer of Sport campaign, which launched in May, will be live throughout most of this year's summer sporting events, reveals Miller. "We're looking forward to highlighting fantastic deals for those perfect sharing occasions. Our weekly summer deals will run across multiple categories, such as beer, wine and spirits, confectionery and grocery," he says.

What does the rest of 2024 hold?

Issues of concern across the remainder of the year and into next include the tobacco ban, with the dual threats of growth in illicit trade and the impact on retailer profitability, says Bestway Retail's Davison. Other challenges are theft, violence and anti-social behaviour towards store colleagues, as well as managing the ongoing cost-of-living pressure, which results in less disposable income to spend in convenience.

However, to counter that, he sees plenty of opportunity, such as the positive attitude of retailers and their ability to tailor their store to be relevant in their trading areas, as well as the support of Bestway Group in helping them to drive footfall, sales and profitability. "The future continues to forecast the convenience market growing, with shopper 'time' still being a core reason that will support business growth and opportunities for those retailers who are in tune with their trading area and are presenting an inclusive range and service package," he says.

Resilience is key over the coming months, as shoppers are struggling as the cost-of-living crisis continues, notes Parfett's O'Neill. "It's important to find a partner that supports your business at every turn, with a dedicated team of retail development advisers, and frequent promotions that boost margin," he observes. "Parfett's is investing to ensure its customers can survive and thrive in an ever-changing market."

Competition from the mults entering into the convenience sector is a big challenge identified by Budgens and Londis, which also cite the vape legislation [single-use vape ban] as another key area that will present



challenges into 2024 and beyond, while the cost-of-living will also continue to pose a huge challenge for the sector. However, both are confident that retailers who stay on top of their game will survive and thrive.

Pressures in grocery retailing over the last 12 months have been mainly of an economic nature, says Spar's Taylor. "Everyone has experienced a period of high inflation. There has been a tightening labour market, created by the rise in the national minimum wage, and our hard-working store colleagues have borne the brunt of the recent sharp increase in theft and anti-social behaviour. Grocery retailing just doesn't get any easier."

Spar is incredibly resilient in times like these, he adds. "We remain a community of mostly family-owned businesses, both at retail and at wholesale, so we are in it for the long term. We have structured ourselves to be able to weather storms like Covid and inflation."

Upcoming investment from the company's wholesalers will run into

the tens of millions of pounds in the coming years, covering plant and buildings, manufacturing facilities, IT systems, stores, consumer and retailer pricing initiatives and retailer store investment schemes, he adds.

Finally, at One Stop, Miller says the vape legislation will bring retailers the challenge of educating customers to move away from single-use vapes. Among other challenges he cites the need to maintain customer loyalty as consumers continue to shop around for value, while engaging with younger, Gen Z shoppers will also be important to ensure the group stays ahead of the game.

Indeed, franchise & fascia groups will continue to nurture their competitive set to foster loyalty and increased sales in their local communities and, with the sun finally arriving, there is optimism that the summer will bring plenty of opportunities to do just that.

Sources

¹ Lumina Intelligence, February 2024

One Stop

Unrivalled support for franchisees

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One Stop

As the cost-of-living crisis drives shoppers to look for value from their groceries, One Stop has worked hard to support its franchisees' success and help them retain shopper loyalty. "We launched a £1m 'Price Drop' campaign, with everyday essentials and fresh products available at cheaper prices. This reduced the pressure on customers' pockets and gave our franchisees a competitive edge," it says.

With consumers seeking out healthier and fresher options, One Stop has also introduced 140 new product lines in this category, and says brand loyalty from consumers and retailers remains high.

A major priority is creating opportunities for its franchisees to thrive. "Backed by Tesco, we listen to our retailers' feedback, using forums such as our own Franchisee Annual Conference. We invest significantly into the refit of a franchisee's store, installing technology such as self-service tills, and helping to meet their needs on



“We invest significantly into the refit of a franchisee’s store and offer a seamless supply chain”

home delivery, which is now available from 790 stores. We also support multi-site retailing with efficient EPOS and finance systems to enable them to profitably open more stores.

“To further support our franchisees, we offer a seamless supply chain and, despite tougher recent trading, we’ve provided better promotions to help increase our retailers’ sales and profits.”



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Find out more



Costcutter/Bargain Booze

Leading hybrid evolution

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KEY CONCEPTS

Costcutter with
Bargain Booze
Costcutter with Wine Rack
best-one with
Bargain Booze

Over the last year Bargain Booze in a Costcutter has continued to evolve its multi award-winning hybrid approach and, following further recruits of the concept, it has successfully launched a more premium-focused Wine Rack in a Costcutter as well as its first Bargain Booze implant in a best-one.

“The evolution of our multi award-winning hybrid offer has continued over the last 12 months, with more retailers taking and presenting their shoppers with the exceptional Costcutter grocery, fresh and own-label offering, while then wowing them with a significantly upweighted Bargain Booze beers, wines and spirits category,” says the company.

“This, coupled with fantastic promotions across all categories, is then complemented with vibrant direct-to-store and local supplier ranges, which ultimately provide our retailers and their shoppers with the optimum store concept to successfully compete and thrive in their trading area,” it explains.

Best-in-class alcohol range

Bargain Booze has one of the biggest premium spirits and premium beer ranges, with over 1,400 BWS lines. “Our expert buying team use supplier-led data, customer insights and competitor knowledge to create our award-winning proposition,” says the company. “As part of Bestway Wholesale, we are one of the first-to-market choices by suppliers for NPD, driving trend and growth areas.



“The hybrid concept allows our retailers to present a truly inclusive offer that is relevant to their trading area”

“We use leading data analytics to drive performance and our franchisees have the flexibility to centre their offers around what they know will work in their area. The hybrid concept offers the ultimate best of all worlds and allows our retailers to present a truly inclusive offer of grocery and alcoholic beverages that is relevant to their trading area,” it adds.

Support from the top

“With Bestway also being an independent family-owned organisation, this helps the concept stand apart within the sector as our retailers can access senior executives with ease and can be heard when they have points to highlight.

“We will continue to evolve our hybrid trading model to support greater operational efficiency alongside the best choice and availability in fresh food and alcohol for our retailers and their shoppers.”

Costcutter[®]

Bargain Booze



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own label products
and market leading
fresh and alcohol range



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Manager

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convenience & off-licence concept.



“ A truly unique
concept. By combining the
convenience of everyday
essentials with the diverse
selection and competitive
prices of a dedicated off
licence, it offers
unparalleled value and
convenience to shoppers ”



Peter Patel - Costcutter Bargain Booze
Meopham

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Costcutter[®] **best-one** **Bargain Booze**



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best-one

Standing out among symbols

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best-one

Over the last year best-one has successfully reviewed its offer and has started a series of continual improvement plans to enhance how it works with its retailers, reveals the company. “We aim to ensure that we support them to thrive for the long term and gain the full benefits of being part of the Bestway family,” it says. “As part of our continual improvement of best-one, we have focused on simplifying how we work with our retailers to support retaining and attracting more to the brand.

“We have some exciting developments across the brand. One to look out for is the relaunch of our rebate scheme. We recently launched our own-label brand under the new branding ‘Best-in’ and have a big focus on ensuring our best-one retailers gain the best price when shopping in our Bestway depots.

“We continue to support retailers with offers of co-investment packages, free store design created by our central design team, and a dedicated project manager to facilitate the development and creation of high-performing stores that we are all proud of and shoppers want to visit.”

Retailer working group

The symbol business has also improved its website and how it communicates its ongoing weekly retailer updates. “The launch of a new retailer working group has been a real success with retailers, helping us to evaluate our offer and services and assist with how we evolve it moving forward,” it adds.



“In terms of supporting footfall and shoppers, we continue to focus on what best-one is known for: great impulse, food-to-go and licensed ranges, backed by a competitive promotional package”

“With regards to supporting footfall and shoppers, we continue to focus on what best-one is strong on and known for: great impulse, food-to-go and beers, wines and spirits ranges, backed up by a brand relevant and competitive promotional package.”

The best-one brand has recently been refreshed in one of the company’s owned stores and the business reports that it is seeing strong performance on the back of this development.

“We will continue to take learnings to help us improve the retailer offer and shopper experience in-store,” it notes.

Appealing proposition

The competitive pricing, promotional package, a highly competitive rebate scheme and great availability, due to having access to both delivered and collection from a Bestway cash & carry, hugely supports the best-one concept, making it a very appealing proposition for independent retailers, adds the company.

“With our family-owned symbol group committed to continual improvement and increased simplicity, which make Bestway an easier business to work with, there is significant benefit for best-one retailers, and this helps us to stand out from the symbol crowd.”



best-one

Best-in

Exclusive
award-winning
own label range



Rebates of up
to 5% available



Competitive
wholesale pricing



Store development
co-investment
funding available

More retailers are joining best-one

because they can see we're the right
choice for them



“After working with
the team at best-one,
we feel we are definitely
going in the right
direction. We are
so proud to be a part
of the best-one family
and look forward to
the future.”



Barry Thomas - best-one, Doncaster

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Budgens

Putting the customer first

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KEY BRANDS

Budgens

One of the biggest challenges over the past year has been inflation, rising costs and the continued cost-of-living crisis for consumers.

At Budgens, the company has redoubled its efforts to deliver for its retailers, working hard with its supplier partners to deliver fantastic products, promotions and strong margins wherever possible, it says. “The challenge from the increased presence of the multiples in the convenience sector has meant we have also had to up our game to make sure our offer remains the best in the market and we support our retailers to be as competitive as possible,” notes the company. “We have done this by continuing to develop our own-brands, maintaining availability, delivering our best-ever SLAs and working hard with our added value service partners to deliver exclusive deals to help our retailers save more and make more.”

Budgens added another 65 stores to its estate in the past year, with over 70% of those coming from competitors, which is testament to the offer, it notes. The estate now has over 425 members.

Strength of own-brand

Jack’s and Euro Shopper have seen huge sales increases over the past year, with double-digit growth as a result of developing the offer further with Budgens’ Fresh 4 and Butchers specials promotions, on top of freezer-filling own-brand bundle deals, reveals the company. “Adding the right products to



“Our promotions remain the best in the market, and our margins are some of the strongest”

own-brand ranges is key to developing the offer, especially where there is a gap in the range,” it says. “Maintaining customer loyalty is more about maintaining availability and strong RSPs. At Budgens we don’t just drive own brand we also drive our branded partners hard as well, with strong promotions and PORs for our retailers

“We are particularly pleased about how we have continued to deliver the benefits of being part of a bigger group with more group exclusives, first-to-markets and NPS than ever before, keeping Budgens’ retailers ahead of the game,” it says. “We have also continued to make Budgens simple to do business with, providing extra benefits such as free recycling, investing in our infrastructure and also continuing to develop our exclusive added-value service deals to help crime prevention and also to innovate in the food/drinks-to-go area.

“Our promotions remain the best in the market, and our margins are some of the strongest. This, along with product innovation, means Budgens’ stores are a real destination for shoppers. Budgens remains a zero-cost model, which really helps, and being part of a bigger group enables the fascia to stand out from the competition. We have a laser-like focus on putting the customer first.”



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No membership fees,
free marketing package

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Great quality products

“We have owned our Budgens store for over 13 years now! More recently with Budgens’s support our refurbishment, updating our store layout, products and additional services has brought a new flare to the business and is optimising our sales!”

**David Knight
Hassocks**

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Costcutter

Taking the lead from retailers

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Costcutter

Over the last year Costcutter has been thrilled with the success it has obtained, winning over 50 industry recognised awards since 2017 – and 20 in 2023 alone – for both Costcutter retailers and its Costcutter with a Bargain Booze implant operators.

“The relationships we have with our retailers continue to be an essential element of how we trade, and we have further enhanced this by introducing a retailer working group to support the brand’s direction,” it says.

“We have attracted new retailers via our upweighted team of new business managers across the UK. We continue to actively support both our existing retailers and our groups and national accounts in opening new stores, supporting them with offers of co-investment packages, free store design created by our central design team, and a dedicated project manager to facilitate the development and creation of high-performing stores that shoppers want to visit.”

Driving the awareness and ranging of an own-label value offer has been successful, with use of the Co-op selection, it adds. “We have also been able to help retailers present a unique and inclusive in-store offer by working with our large selection of direct-to-store and local suppliers, which has helped retain and attract shoppers.”

Providing access to the wider Bestway Wholesale supply chain and cash & carry network, with total group buying for rebate purposes, has been well received by all retailers, it adds.

“The importance of both what we do and how we do it has also played a



“Working with and listening to our retailers – to ensure we are continually improving – is an essential aspect of what makes Costcutter so successful”

large part in attracting new retailers, with our teams focusing on developing long-lasting relationships supported by robust joint business plans,” it says. “This was evident and was a core reason why the Penny Petroleum organisation made the decision to place all of its stores in England and Wales with Costcutter over the last 12 months.”

With a suite of Bestway brands and supply chains available, Costcutter retailers benefit from access to the right brands and offer to maximise their specific store needs, based on their location, demographic and primary shopper mission, it says. “Our focus on relationships remains vitally important, as working with and listening to our retailers – to ensure we are continually improving – is an essential aspect of what makes Costcutter so successful.”

Agreeing an annual Joint Business Plan has proved to be hugely successful with both our retailers and supplier partners, as all are aligned on what we need to focus on and how we plan to work together to deliver all of our goals, it notes.

“Having the ability to utilise multiple supply chains and be rewarded for your total purchasing is a further benefit that ensures Costcutter stands out from the crowd as this supports maximising ranging, availability, sales growth and profitability.”



Costcutter^c



Access to over
2,000 Co-op own
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More choice. More sales. More profit.

Championing and supporting
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“If you really want to
make money and make
your store a success,
then you need to look
at Costcutter and
Bestway Retail.”

Anand Cheema - Costcutter Falkirk



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Londis

Strong support for retailers

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Sales Director – BRP

KEY BRANDS

Londis

↙ Londis has had a fantastic year of recruitment, with almost 200 retailers joining the symbol's family, it reveals. Londis now has over 2,400 members and almost three-quarters of its recruits have come from other symbol brands, it says. Londis was also voted best Symbol by retailers at The Convenience Awards 2023.

“We are always looking to develop our own-brand, monitoring WSPs and RSPs to ensure they offer the best possible value to shoppers and strong margins for our retailers. Our Jack's own-brand offers great quality products at a great price. We have added extra SKUs to the range and have introduced promotions to drive sales further.

Keeping a close eye on the market

While there is an increased interest in fresh & chilled products, it depends on the demographic within each store's catchment area as to whether shoppers will pay more, says Londis. “We monitor the market closely to see what new products we can bring in to enhance our ranges, alongside introducing key promotions on chilled & fresh lines to drive sales. We also spend a lot of time ensuring the quality of the product is second to none to ensure we retain consumer loyalty.

“Our programme of strong consumer deals has recently been further improved with the recent introduction of ‘Butchers Specials’ – a programme of Jack's fresh meat deals with a strong consumer deal and enhanced POR. This is in addition to our Fresh 4



“As part of a bigger group, we can offer more than most of our competitors, with exclusive products and deals, and our promotions are some of the strongest in the sector”

seasonal produce deals and reduced WSPs on selected chilled lines, giving extra margin to our retailers.”

The on-the-go mission is seeing continued growth this year and Londis retailers can access some great deals with Samworths, Country Choice and Frozen Brothers, it reveals. “And we always go the extra mile to get the best possible prices for our retailers. Recent deals include Calippo Burst, Uporia and our group-exclusive brand Bobalicious for bubble tea.

“Competition in the convenience sector is always strong and at Londis we are always on the look-out for ways to help our retailers by helping them to Make More or Save More on added value services. The other area we focus on is making Londis simple to do business with,” it notes. “As part of a bigger group, we can offer more than most of our competitors with exclusive products and deals, and our promotions are some of the strongest in the sector.”

The past year saw Londis launch its Store of the future, showcasing all of its latest thinking, including digital screens, new-look POS, a beer cave and merchandising efficiencies throughout the store. “Looking forward, there is great potential in fresh & chilled, as well as food/drinks on-the-go,” it says. “Across the summer we will have our best ever promotions to drive footfall throughout this important season.”



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- Earn up to 5% discount*
- Group Exclusives & First to Market NPD



Great quality products

"We have 2 Londis stores! The Food To Go deals we have been able to provide our customers with have increased store traffic and sales. We will be opening more stores with Londis in the future!"

Karthick Marimuthu
Chelford

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Londis

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“The increase in quality and breadth of range that Co-op Own-Brand offers, particularly on seasonal, really has driven footfall.”

Jon and Zena, TOUT'S

TOUT'S improved their product range with Nisa

Boost your store offering and increase footfall with the **retail expertise of Nisa** and our **quality Co-op range** of products. We helped TOUT'S build a store they wanted with Co-op's popular and nationally recognised own-brand range that attracts shoppers against less well-known offerings.

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A. G. Parfett & Sons

Supporting retailer margins

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Go Local
Go Local Extra
The Local

Parfetts saw turnover grow by 6.7% to £646m in its latest annual results. The growth has come thanks to a focus on supporting margins for retailers, says John O'Neill, customer development manager for the business.

The wholesaler attributes the success to focusing on increasing customers' profits through developments in its retail offering, extensive relevant product ranges, including the Go Local own-label, and more frequent promotions. The employee-ownership model means that all profits are invested back into the business, with the continued expansion of its delivery network with the recent opening of a new depot in Birmingham, depot operations and symbol estate, alongside investment in retailer margins.

"Investment in the delivery service and ordering technology that makes the process seamless has helped bring the benefits of buying from Parfetts to a record audience," says O'Neill. "The Go Local network now includes 1,300 stores, with more retailers, from the Scottish Borders to Gloucestershire, joining the Retail Club and Go Local symbol group."

Parfetts is focused on continuing to deliver growth for its retailers and is proactive in ensuring they have the best support for their businesses, he adds.

Flexibility for independents

Parfetts' employee-ownership model means it has the flexibility to allow



“Parfetts’ employee-ownership model allows retailers to retain their independence”

retailers to retain their independence and have the ability to trade under the Go Local, Go Local Extra or The Local fascias. It offers a truly flexible operation with no minimum spend limits or store sizes.

"The approach is part of our commitment to helping retailers grow and thrive," adds O'Neill, who explains that, because the business does not have shareholders to pay, it allows Parfetts to invest more back into price and margin to help retailers reap the rewards.

Alongside access to store layout refurbishment and improvements, Parfetts is also increasing seasonal events, which are designed to drive footfall, increase basket spend and grow margins. Plus, it continues to offer its usual promotional support to retailers, including one-day specials, manager's specials, three-weekly promotion schedules and supplier takeovers.



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“We have been with Go Local for a number of years and have worked closely with the team to continually improve our store - increasing footfall, basket spend and margin substantially over that time.”

Andy Robinson :: Summer Lane Stores



Winner
Yorkshire & Humber
Retailer of the Year
Go Local Awards 2023



BENEFITS OF JOINING US:

- No joining fee
- Free fascia
- Free leaflet distribution
- Free nationwide delivery*
- Competitive pricing and strong margins
- A further 2% rebate when you run the full 3 weekly promotion
- Free store development support
- A dedicated Retail Development Advisor (RDA)
- Access to category advice to drive basket spend and sales
- Access to over 7,000 products
- Access to 3 weekly promotional packages with 120+ lines plus every day low price lines (4 week buying in period)
- Margin boosting deals including showcases, trade specials, one day offers and seasonal offers
- Free POS packs including consumer leaflets
- Support of a full marketing service driving customer footfall and spend
- Tailored digital marketing support including access to our central social media accounts
- Free EPOS system with promotional PLOF updated each promotion

*Delivery availability is based on minimum spend and order quantity qualifications.

**TO DISCUSS JOINING US AND FOR A STORE VISIT
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Premier

Helping retailers to thrive

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Sales Director – Retail

KEY BRANDS

Premier

➔ Premier retailers are a part of the UK's No.1 symbol group, and the retailer has been awarded Symbol Retailer of the Year at the Grocer Gold Awards for two consecutive years. Having launched 30 years ago, Premier has over 4,500 stores around the UK and delivers more profits for retailers and a better experience for shoppers. "With over 20 years of consecutive growth, joining Premier offers independent retailers the opportunity to provide a fantastic convenience store in their community, supported with great value, profitable promotions and quality products," says sales director – retail Martyn Parkinson.

Backed by Booker, the UK's leading food and drink wholesaler, Premier does not operate any joining or membership fees and installs the fascia and imagery free of charge. Premier retailers can shop at any Booker branch, benefiting from cash & carry prices. To ensure their shoppers can make the best choice to suit their individual requirements, Premier retailers stock both of Booker's exclusive and trusted Euro Shopper and Jack's own-brands.

"Regular in-store promotions make the most of key dates and seasons, while recently updated POS enhances the shopping experience to drive sales and really highlight the value of our deals," explains Parkinson. "Premier's famous Mega Deals not only emphasise the low prices aspect of Premier but ensures the best choice for shoppers across all categories of fresh, frozen, grocery and impulse. This year has seen more first-to-market and exclusive



“Premier offers independent retailers the opportunity to provide a fantastic convenience store in their community, supported with great value, profitable promotions and quality products”

products available in Premier stores than ever before.”

With a new creative, Premier is advertised daily on TV with an audience of over 100m annually. "This creates additional awareness of the brand, driving footfall into stores and growing the business by driving the value message," says Parkinson. "By including on-the-go food and drinks into their stores, Premier retailers can capitalise on current trends like the latest addition to the Refresh zone with bubble-tea machines, and energy-efficient 'Soft Drinks Cave', creating a real community destination store."

Despite a challenging year, Premier's Spend & Save initiative helps retailers save up to 5% on all purchases, bar tobacco, and adds to their bottom line, improving profitability, he notes. In addition, a wide range of services such as energy savings, free Epos and central billing have been created to add additional value and keep operating costs low for Premier retailers.

"As we continue to go from strength to strength, Premier's focus is on increasing choice, lowering prices and improving service to help independent retailers become the heart of their community while managing a successful business."



Premier

MORE FOOTFALL MORE PROFIT



“ I'm just beyond proud of what we've achieved here. Premier have supported me every step of the way and I'm so grateful to the entire team ”

Arun Ehamparam,
Premier Talbot Stores,
Bournemouth



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- Free fascia & window imagery
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- Enhanced fresh, chilled & frozen range
- Food to go solutions
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- Exclusive NPД
- Access to reduced Tobacco Pricing*
- Everyday low price deals
- Access to sustainability initiatives
- Specific support for small format stores

*Terms and conditions apply.



SPAR UK

Independent success

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BWS, Fresh and Frozen
Trudy Hills
SPAR Trading
Director – Grocery

KEY BRANDS

SPAR
EUROSPAR
SPAR Market
SPAR Express

SPAR has been winning in convenience for over 60 years and we encourage any retail business looking to be at the forefront of the industry to speak to us today

➔ The strength of Spar lies in the structure and range of support services available to independent retailers, says Ian Taylor, retail and brand development director. “Retailer recruitment continues to be a huge focus and we are welcoming a number of new independent retailers and stores, whom we are supporting, as they look to increase their retail space and grow their own estate over the next few years.

“With the strength of the Spar family behind them, independent retailers have every opportunity to not just survive but thrive. It is about confidence: with Spar, retailers have the confidence to continue investing in their business to take them to even greater heights; local communities have confidence that their local store is going to continue meeting their ever-changing needs; and suppliers have the confidence that there is a successful, sustainable independent convenience group working effectively in almost every major community in the country.”

Being a member of the Spar family works as it really is the best of both worlds, combining the professionalism of a large symbol group with the energy and individuality of independent retailers, he says. “As a symbol group we allow individual retailers to derive all the benefits of being part of a large national organisation while retaining their independence,” he notes. “We support our retailers with tailored store formats, unique retail solutions and customer propositions matched to specific locations to ensure growth.”



“Being a member of Spar means a lot more than having a well-known name above the door; it is about being part of a sophisticated network of retailers, sharing each other’s success”

With Spar taking care of the branding, own-label, marketing and store development, and with a wealth of assistance available from our five wholesalers, teams of business development managers [BDMs] and fellow store owners, each retailer is free to concentrate on providing the best possible service to the local community and make profitable sales, adds Taylor.

Being a member of Spar means a lot more than having a well-known name above the door; it is about being part of a sophisticated network of retailers sharing each other’s success. “We believe in a strong collaboration between all our five regional wholesalers, retailers and suppliers, who consistently pull together to deliver the best independent retail proposition in the market,” he says.

Like many individual Spar retailers, our wholesalers have made a long-term commitment to Spar with significant re-investment in new warehousing and vehicles, improved product ranges and the latest technology. This investment is both sophisticated and highly responsive to ensure Spar stores can maintain high availability levels of the products that shoppers want to buy.

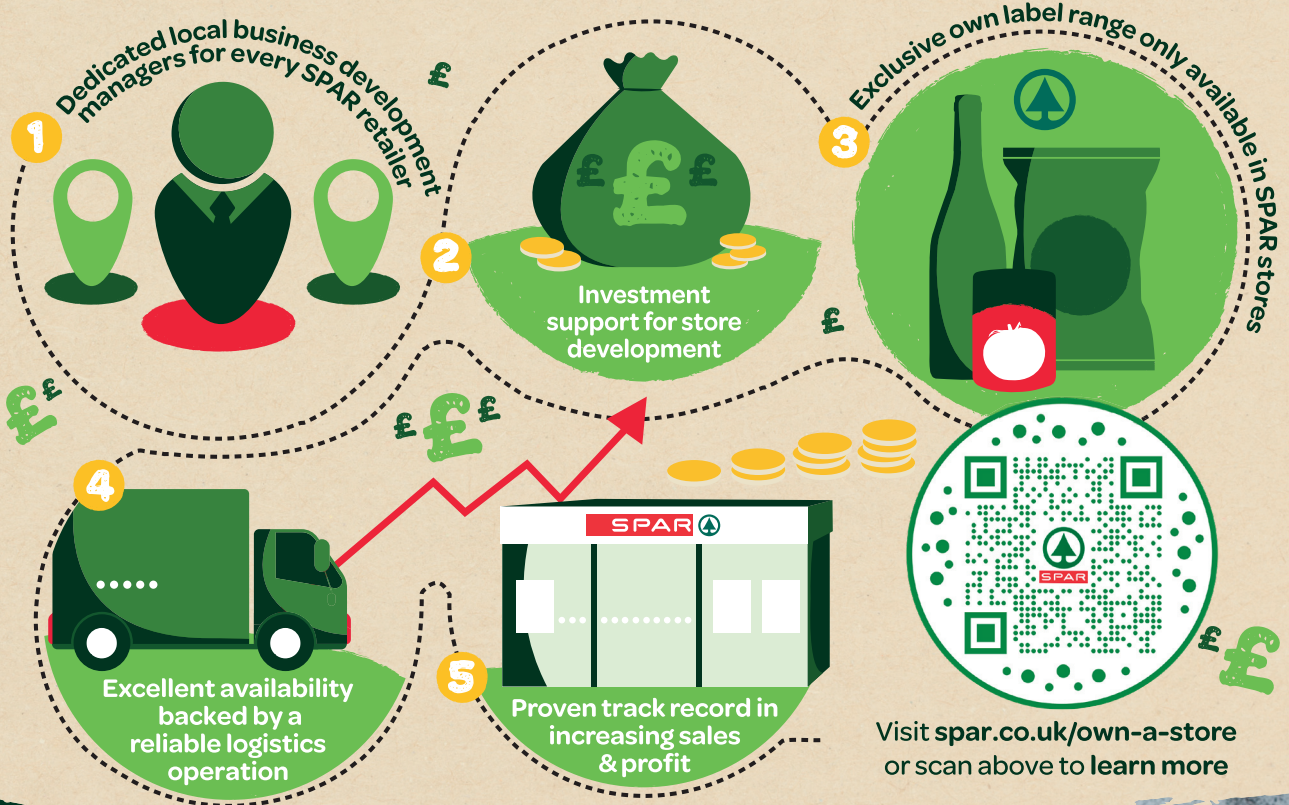
“Ultimately, the success of Spar is all about setting the standard for the best possible independent retailers in the sector to thrive. By continuing to recruit great independent retailers, they too can benefit from the spirit of Spar.”



JOIN SPAR

A FAMILY OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS

REASONS TO JOIN SPAR



"I'm genuinely impressed by the strong family atmosphere and the superb support offered by the entire team at SPAR. From dedicated BDMs, to the efficient and responsive head office marketing, retail and distribution crew, all working seamlessly to ensure our success and growth."

Daniall Nadeem
 SPAR Motherwell Road,
 Bellshill, North Lanarkshire



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