



## The last word

### On the success at Waitrose

According to the latest retail figures provided by the British Retail Consortium and KPMG, this January Britain's shops suffered their worst trading for 15 years – prompting fears of a 'double-dip' recession. Indeed, with the arctic conditions of the economic climate only slightly less chilling than the bout of extreme weather which recently hit the UK, tightening the post-Christmas purse strings has never been easier for snowbound shoppers.

However a recent survey taken by consumer watchdog Which? has shown that the British public is prepared to pay for quality: Waitrose tops the list as the UK's favourite supermarket. Seen to be at the pricier end of the high street stores, Waitrose has long prided itself on the claim that "Everyone Deserves Quality Food" and figures show that consumer opinion is firmly with them. Yet, with price cutters Lidl and Aldi closely following Waitrose in the Which? poll, suggesting that cost still remains an important factor, we are left taking stock on what exactly Waitrose is getting so right?

Perceived as a paragon of excellent customer service, Waitrose's popularity with the public could perhaps stem from its commitment to the provision of high quality products 'honestly priced' and helpful staff. In addition, as readers of this magazine will recognise, the upmarket chain is also notable for its in-store sampling services. But in these straitened times the shopper experience offered by an organisation is surely insufficient on its own to draw customers away from a better deal elsewhere.

Not to be outdone by its competitors therefore, Waitrose famously introduced a range of 'Essential' products, promising "quality you would expect at prices you wouldn't" and experienced a 13.6% value sales uplift from December '08 – December '09 (IGD Retail Analysis, 7 January). January also saw the exclusive offer of a new five-part meal deal, promoting a "£10 Quick Cook Dinner for Two", which apparently proved to be a great success.

Waitrose, it seems, has struck just the right balance in a time of economic uncertainty – providing value for money without compromising on the quality or integrity of its business. It is an enviable position.

**Tracey Bagshaw**  
Managing Director UK  
SERVICE INNOVATION GROUP



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### On the shape of things to come

Whilst we are still in turbulent economic times, there are some green shoots on the horizon and at Ambience we are very positive and excited about the coming year. During such times clients more so than ever before are pressing for greater economies and productivity for less return which is naturally squeezing FM companies to downsize and lower their overheads.

**Raj Nagji,**  
Ambience FM

Experiential marketing is perfectly poised to take an increased share of the marketing cake over the next few years. With media fragmenting and marketers struggling to get people's attention, experiential helps brands touch consumers in a 'real', personal way. And, at a time when consumers are questioning everything from financial services to pharmaceuticals, there is a major opportunity for experiential to rebuild consumer trust by becoming the real, accountable face of brands.

**Liz Richardson,**  
Closer

## The last word

### On electrical retailer vs online

Electrical retailers will hold their own and compete effectively as they fight for dominance in the sector. New retailers will reinvigorate the sector ensuring consumers get the best deal and level of service they desire from all players.

Online can be great for research, but in the end we are creatures of habit and when buying a high ticket electrical item, we want to see it, touch it and experience it. It's up to the retailer how well they can close the sale and not let the consumer walk away and buy online. This is the challenge for retailers and brands and closing sales is where Field Marketing comes into its own. Gekko, over a 3 week Christmas period, did just that with its demonstration teams achieving 23,000 sales.

**Daniel Todaro,**  
Gekko

Things are set to get even more challenging for traditional bricks-and-mortar retailers. Increasing numbers of consumers will buy electrical products online – although, of course, they may well still visit a shop to view and find out more about a complex product before going online and buying it! There is definitely an opportunity here for online retailers – can they find experiential techniques to help them forge personal relationships with their consumers? And also an opportunity for the American Best Buy retail giant which is coming to British high streets this spring. It may be a legend on the other side of the Atlantic, but how can Best Buy persuade British consumers to part with their cash in-store?

**Liz Richardson,**  
Closer

## The Fast word

### On experiential at the World Cup

Brands need to challenge the norm and think about how they can develop something different to engage with consumers, by developing activity in unexpected locations, for example. Activity should be inclusive and bring all fans together as one nation. It should address all types of fans, both hard-core and bandwagon-jumpers. Two final tips:

1. Keep it fresh. Don't harp on about 1966.
2. Don't alienate the girls!

**Liz Richardson,** Closer

## The Fast word

### on 2012 rowers

Former Olympic Gold medal rower Greg Searle is making a return bid for glory at the London 2012 Olympics – with the support of field marketing agency CPM.

Greg won a Gold at the Barcelona Olympics on 2 August 1992 and has set his sights on participating in the finals of the London Olympic rowing programme in 2012. CPM has pledged to sponsor him as he embarks on the rigorous training regime required for his Olympic comeback mission.

Greg says: "The second of August is a day I've celebrated every year like a birthday. I suddenly thought to myself: "Wouldn't it be amazing to row on that day in London, exactly 20 years later.""

As a partner in Lane4, the business performance consultancy founded by Olympic swimming gold medallist Adrian Moorhouse, Greg is used to helping companies draw up winning strategies, but from January 2010 he is setting his own performance targets. His first goal is to make the Great Britain team in 2010. At the first assessment trial of the winter for rowers outside the senior GB squad he finished first out of 86 entrants.

Says CPM managing director Martin Ryan: "We are delighted to have forged this relationship with Greg, which will enable us to share his journey to 2012 and bring the Olympics to life for our business. In return, Greg has become an ambassador for CPM and our clients. His determination to overcome challenges and attain peak performance makes him a fantastic role model for all of us."

"As part of our sponsorship agreement, Greg presented at our Management Conference in early February and will be working with CPM's leadership team on corporate fitness this Summer"

CPM already promotes a strong health and fitness culture, and enthusiastically supports Active Sport, an organisation that promotes youth participation in sport. Last year CPM staff completed the Big Green Bike Ride, a 330-mile cyclathon that raised over £3,000 in aid of the NSPCC. For 2010, the Spirit of CPM Challenge will see a five-stage bike ride from its Thame HQ to the office of CPM Ireland, in Dublin.