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C-store sales heat up as summer arrives

Retailers enjoy sales boosts of up to 15% following a disappointing June

SIMON BANKS

Retailers across the country have been enjoying sales uplifts as high as 15% thanks to the hot and sunny weather that has bathed many parts of the UK in July.

The welcome sales boost followed a 2.8% fall in UK footfall in June on the back of poor weather and Brexit, according to the BRC-Springboard footfall and vacancies monitor.

"Sales across all categories have been up over the last few weeks, with a total increase of 15% at our larger store, thanks to the great weather we've had," said Baz Jethwa, owner of two Costcutter stores in Farnworth, Bolton.

"The most popular categories have been soft drinks, food-to-go and alcohol. This year, we cross merchandised the barbecues and paper plates next to alcohol and soft drinks and they have complemented each other really well," he added.

Nick Farnsworth, owner of Farnsworth News on the Isle of Wight, was also enjoying hot sales. "The store has done very well over the last few weeks; we have probably doubled our sales in soft drinks," he said.

Mohammad Afzal, owner of Nisa on Abingdon Road,



The hot weather has been driving footfall and sales across many categories, store owners say

Oxford, also said sales were up by 15% in the past three weeks on certain categories, including alcohol and single frozen ice creams.

"We have also stocked a few new lines this summer, including coals for barbecues, big packs of ice cubes and a 'buy one get one half price' offer on wines, which have all been very successful," he added.

The Rio Olympics, which kick off on Friday 5 August, could also provide another valuable sales opportunity, Mohammad continued. "Deals on big alcohol brands such as Budweiser, Carlsberg and

Fosters were really popular during Euro 2016 and hopefully will continue to be during the Olympics," he said.

The Met Office is forecast further warm and settled weather to come in August with a prolonged and settled warm spell predicted for the middle of the month.

OPINION

Opportunities

“Barbecue meats and frozen ice cream have been two of our biggest sellers. We also introduced a new range of unique sausages and burgers including kangaroo, ostrich and crocodile, which are proving to be a hit.”

Rav Garcha, West Midlands-based multi-site owner

“I gave customers free samples of an Eton Mess dessert to inspire them to make it at home by buying the products in store. It worked a treat.”

Harj Dhasee, Nisa Village Stores, Mickleton, Glos

KEEPING COOL OVER CHILLER TROUBLE

The warm weather may have boosted sales but it has also put chillers under strain.

Nick Farnsworth had to call out engineers for a faulty compressor. "It's important that retailers regularly

get their chillers and fridges checked in the summer," he said.

Mohammad Afzal added: "The chillers are working extra hard to keep everything cold so it has burned out the motor. Sales are

up, but it's swings and roundabouts because we've had to pay out for maintenance."

A number of Tesco stores were forced to discard chilled foods after chillers broke down in the July heat.