

A man wearing a grey beanie and a red jacket with a dark blue stripe on the sleeve is leaning on a metal railing. He is holding a red water bottle in his hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a fence.

Time to re-charge on energy drinks

Healthier shopping habits continue to shape the functional and energy drinks category, but the sector is responding to change. Sarah Kyle reports

there are strong signs that the UK functional drinks category is ready for a relaxing alternative as consumers look for something to take the edge off their day without turning to alcohol.

"Tranquini was developed in response to increasing consumer demand for positivity and is also focused on promoting a relaxed lifestyle that inspires people to take a step back, to be positive and to allow for good to happen in their lives," says Higgins.

Sugar-free drink Aspire is another brand looking to tap into the trend for natural ingredients in the functional and energy drinks category. The drink, which was developed to appeal to shoppers looking for a sugar-free alternative with health benefits, is said to contain multivitamins and green tea.

Neil Blewitt, director at Aspire, says: "Consumers are becoming more health-conscious than ever before and are therefore looking for healthier offerings with less sugars and calories, as well as added benefits and functionality."

He reminds retailers not to be afraid of stocking new products, as it can help spark interest and encourage impulse purchases from shoppers browsing



£30m

investment
by Coca-Cola
European
Partners to
offer low- or
zero-calorie
alternatives

in-store. "New product development is always important to ensure brands stay one step ahead of consumers' needs," adds Blewitt.

Right range

While flavour and healthier options play a considerable role in the functional and energy drinks fixture, it is also important to consider factors beyond ingredients, such as size, range, price and location.

Burgess at CCEP says it is essential for retailers to provide shoppers with a range of formats and to think about their shopper missions. The majority of energy drinks, for example, are bought for immediate consumption and should therefore be stocked in the chiller to guarantee that they are cold and ready to drink. It is also important to remember that some shoppers will specifically search for re-sealable formats to keep their drink fresh on-the-go, while others will want to purchase multi-packs.

"Consumers are demanding variety within the energy drinks sector and retailers can benefit from stocking a

range of pack sizes and formats," says Burgess. "Sales of energy drinks for future consumption are also on the increase as people stock up for the week ahead."

Fisher at Red Bull UK also stresses the importance of offering a range of pack sizes, as it can help boost sales in-store and create customer loyalty. He claims product size is the first or second most important decision for a consumer, behind which brand to choose, but it is essential to remember that each shopper mission will be different.

"For the shopper, size creates loyalty – Red Bull consumers know what they like and stick to it," says Fisher. "By delivering a range, retailers can attract different shoppers into store. Both size and diet are driving the category, so by offering different sizes and charging a premium accordingly, retailers can ensure they are maintaining value in the category." 

“ The modern day soft drink consumer is becoming increasingly health-conscious, and the energy drinks sector is adapting to demand for lighter options

Amy Burgess, trade communications manager, Coca-Cola European Partners