

FOCUS ON: FROZEN FOOD



TOP ADVERTISERS

Frozen Food: 31 March 2011

	TOTAL £m	CHANGE y-o-y %	MEDIA				
			Cinema %	Outdoor %	Press %	Radio %	TV %
McCain	5.8	24.4	•	•	3.4	5.8	90.8
Birds Eye Field Fresh	3.4	169.2	•	•	13.3	•	86.7
Birds Eye Bake to Perfection	2.0	3938.2	•	•	3.3	•	96.7
McCain Chips	2.0	45.9	•	74.9	25.1	•	•
Birds Eye Fish	1.8	-17.5	•	•	0.2	•	99.8
Goodfella's	1.8	-	•	•	3.9	•	96.1
Birds Eye	1.7	-66.6	•	•	1.5	13.1	85.4
Aunt Bessie's	1.6	-7.8	•	•	14.1	•	85.9
Birds Eye Chicken	1.2	72.5	•	•	•	•	100.0
Aunt Bessie's Yorkshires (Chicken)	1.2	-	•	•	•	•	100.0
TOTAL (TOP 10)	22.5	31.2	•	6.5	6.7	2.5	84.3

● Frozen food is doing more than most sectors to push its products, says Andy Smith, business director for media at Ebiquity. "It has increased its advertising expenditure more than both the total market and the food sector."

● TV spend is up, Smith adds, because FMCG advertisers see better return on investment from this medium.

● Chicago Town Pizza and McCain have innovated in this area by using sponsorship as well as conventional advertising. Chicago Town teamed up with X Factor, while McCain sponsored Film4 9pm films (see left), which it says was successful enough to spawn on-pack film promotions on the new Lightly Spiced Wedges packs.

Birds Eye has continued with its much-lauded Polar Bear campaign, with regional audience tests in October showing a 13% uplift in sales as a result of the ad, prompting other brands to push the freshness message of frozen through advertising.

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Data supplied by Ebiquity, which provides independent advertising data and insights to help advertisers improve their ROI.

equivalent," he says. "Consumers understand this message and we need to work on it for other products. With fish, too, customers are getting the message about freshness."

Vallance suggests this may be because the public is more accepting of fish as a frozen product, rather than any specific trick employed by the brands, but Natasha Gladman, marketing director at Young's Seafood, claims that brands like Young's put a lot of work into their advertising. She highlights the recent launch of a campaign for breaded cod and haddock products run in conjunction with folk singing group Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends.

This didn't stop Young's sales tumbling 9.9% in the year to 19 March [Symphony IRI]. Gladman insists that this year will be better. "The success of our breaded range, and our strategy of focusing on a whole category approach to fish and seafood, is

driving growth since these figures came out and, with a strong pipeline of innovation, NPD and new initiatives, we're very optimistic about progress and success this year," she says.

NPD is key, she adds, citing the launch in February of Young's four Large Cod and Haddock Fillets in Kingsmill breadcrumbs. Birds Eye agrees and highlights its £7.5m investment in its fish and seafood products

“Freezers are not attractive but stores could do more to optimise display of frozen products”

last year and the recent launch of Catch Fresh Prawns, which Jobling predicts will "provide the much needed reinvigoration the frozen sector needs".

That certainly seems to be needed when it comes to fish. Not only did its 2.3% growth lag behind overall grocery growth of 3.4%, it also belied a very weak performance by many players in the sector. Experts suggest that sales were flattered by a couple of products selling exceptionally well, while others floundered – partly because of their relatively high price points.

Poor merchandising hasn't helped though and this continues to be an area where the whole frozen category falls down or where some would argue it is let down. "A major hurdle for frozen foods is that it's not a particularly nice shopping experience," says Mark Broughton, planning director at Life Agency. "It suffers from a degree of aisle avoidance – unless