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Sales strategies in year of the pig

Grocery analyst, IGD Asia shares key takeaways following the strong Lunar New Year sales period



Following the peak trading period of Chinese New Year, retail analyst IGD Asia identified six key themes that emerged during last month's festivities.

IGD Singapore director, Shirley Zhu said retailers and brands conduct festive promotions and discounts during the key trading period to boost sales and brand awareness to consumers.

Displays, gift packs and giveaways

In-store, three of the key trends recorded were the abundance of supermarket displays, decorative festive gift packs, and promotional giveaways.

"Retailers also add to the lively in-store atmosphere with cheery music, lanterns and flowers to enhance the shopping experience," said Zhu. "Some retailers use a different theme each year, while others build on the same campaign over years to evoke a sense of familiarity."

China's Freshippo (Hema) stores were decorated to replicate an outdoor market, providing shoppers with a calming experience, and further afield Malaysia's Tesco's harnessed the power

of repetition, with the phrase "Ong Mali" which translates to "prosperity is coming" – a phrase it has been using since 2014.

7-Eleven Hong Kong connected significant purchases with a branding opportunity by providing shoppers who bought oranges with complementary carriers labelled with the word "prosperity".

Social media, community and health

Two of the three remaining trends, social media and giving back to the community were spearheaded by Freshippo in China, Tesco's in Malaysia, and Giant hypermarket in Singapore.

"As the lunar year begins, Chinese people enjoy trying their luck at games, as it is believed that good fortune will follow them if they start the year well," said Zhu.

Freshippo offered customers a number of opportunities to win prizes on its Weibo account, including online tuition courses and Lenovo notebooks, while other brands outside the fresh produce realm offered chances to win money, purchase redemptions and lucky draws via Facebook and WhatsApp.

Bringing luck to the less fortunate, Giant hypermarket in Singapore provided shelf displays alongside staple items where shoppers could buy and donate them at gift collection points in-store. Tesco's Malaysia also offered pre-packaged items for donation to charity.

"Not everyone is able to celebrate the New Year and some retailers have made it very convenient for shoppers to donate to those who need help," said Zhu. "Shoppers like giving back to the community to spread the joy, engaging them in a meaningful way and building goodwill for retailers who organise the activity."

The last trend identified by IGD was health, however, the analyst said shifts toward health-conscious consumption were highlighted mostly by food manufacturers promoting sugar-free offerings and supplements.

In conclusion, Zhu said there are some clear learning opportunities for suppliers and manufacturers during the trading period.

"Messages that revolve around attracting

good fortune can be cleverly arranged in-store to magnify awareness of the range and drive appeal. Standing out from the crowd with innovative packaging ideas will also ensure that your brand stays visible," she noted.

"Suppliers can offer a wider range of healthy food options, so shoppers can enjoy treats while also looking after their health. They should also consider the target shopper when offering prizes – tailoring the gifts can deepen engagement. And finally, giving shoppers

the chance to help the underprivileged during this period will positively enhance your brand image."