



KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED

Beware lazy stereotypes if you want to look after the booze you stand to lose – Matthew Day, director, Gatekeeper Systems

Protecting booze from shoplifters this Christmas

It's not just 'Scrooge' troubled by spirits at Christmas. According to retail crime analysts, spirits are among the top three items pushed out of supermarkets during 'the season to be trolleyed'.

One unsuccessful 'shopper' was arrested in November attempting to leave with £643.95 worth of alcohol in his trolley. He was previously captured on CCTV stealing bottles of vodka, cognac and Jack Daniel's worth £1,246.

But successful prosecutions are rare – just 3% of recorded incidents. There's also much urban mythology surrounding



typical perpetrators, what they steal and how often.

'Controlling trolley push-out thefts' by emeritus professor Adrian Beck investigated the efficacy of the Purchek wheel-locking technology across the estates of two of the UK's largest supermarkets, which have combined sales of £50bn.

It found a high-risk supermarket with annual sales of £40m will experience 140 trolley push-outs per annum, almost three a week, costing £31,500 – equivalent to 4% of all unknown stock loss.

Around 90% of perpetrators operated alone and below the security radar. They were often middle-aged, middle-class shoplifters who would not attract attention. When stopped, 18% offered 'reasons' including that a relative had the receipt, they had forgotten to pay, or their wallet was in the car.

So, in the spirit of Christmas present, the festive moral is beware lazy stereotypes if you want to look after the booze you stand to lose.

Matthew Day, director, Gatekeeper Systems

best of the blogs

With inflation, strikes and Omicron, will Christmas be better than last year?

Christmas 2020 was hardly one big party for those of us outside No 10. But Christmas 2021 isn't shaping up to be a cracker, either. For a start, Christmas dinner is going to be more expensive this year. Analysis published by Kantar yesterday suggested the average cost of a Christmas meal for four is now £27.48, an increase of 3.4% on last year.

Carina Perkins, 8 December

With AG Barr's backing, Moma will be a force to be reckoned with in alt milk

Moma made the move from porridge sachets and ready-to-eat pots into oat milk at the start of 2020, but it is already the third-biggest brand in the category behind Alpro and Oatly, with its range of oat drinks generating more than half of company sales and growing. It's a capital-light proposition with all manufacturing and logistics outsourced, so Barr won't have to sink much money into a brand ready to continue a rapid ascent.

Edward Devlin, 7 December

Tesco will need some steel to see out distribution workers' strike

Morrisons caved. So did DHL. Eyes are now on Tesco to see if it will do the same. Britain's biggest supermarket will certainly be feeling the heat after the public announcement that workers at its DCs are preparing to strike in the weeks before Christmas. However, Tesco seems to be playing hardball.

Harry Holmes, 6 December

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Online hacking at Xmas

Action is needed as hackers patiently wait for the perfect time to strike in a Christmas shopping ambush, with UK consumers preparing to spend £25.6bn on Christmas gifting this year.

To handle the enormous spike in traffic and avoid any unforeseen issues, online retailers will have to deploy additional servers. This means an increase in the number of digital security certificates – web 'passports' that verify buyers' and sellers' identities.

However, for every additional certificate, a potential opening for cybercriminals is created. If the Amazon website's 'passport' was allowed to expire, it could lose a £1m per hour. An outage on this scale would lock shoppers out, and cause an avalanche of financial, regulatory and compliance issues for retailers. Additionally, it could let the bad guys siphon money, data, and much more.

Hackers have already begun preparations for Christmas' gold rush. The National Cyber Security Centre has urged retailers to patch all their software after discovering 4,000 'skimming' attacks, where hackers

created fake copies of well-known e-commerce sites in order to steal customer data.

This proves the need for better digital security. Having a handle on digital security

certificates, the crucial glue that holds the internet together, can help retailers and consumers verify that they are dealing with a legitimate party.

Nick France, CTO, Sectigo



your tweets

Highly processed vegan meat alternatives can't compare with the real deal

I have absolutely no problem with live and let live vegans, but I do have a problem with Big Food lying to me about fake meat being good for me and the planet. I know what's good for me and the planet and it is raised on grass in my county of Yorkshire!

@Adeimantus2

Webinar: What did we learn from COP26?

Some really interesting questions on Gen Z, engaging people on COP26 issues, and articulating messages. All the speakers spoke with candour and passion. Thanks to everyone, especially @TheGrocer, for the opportunity to learn more.

@StevieTheGiant

Balancing price increases

For retailers, inflation represents another hurdle in a long list of recent volatilities. How can retailers battle the negative effects of inflation?

As consumer price sensitivity remains high, the decision to universally increase prices can lead to lost traffic and sales. Instead, retailers need to take a balanced approach to pricing. This can be achieved with technology that looks at the individual price elasticity of each item, and can guide the decision on which items it is safe to make a price increase on and upon which items pricing should remain very aggressive.

With a balanced approach to pricing, made possible with AI and advanced analytics, everybody wins – consumers get lower prices on the items they care about most, and retailers drive optimal growth.

Matt Pavich, senior director of retail innovation, Revionics