

Laundry Products - UK - September 2010

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What is this report about?

The difficult economic climate is reshaping the market for laundry products as consumers seek to make savings on their essential purchases. This is changing shopping patterns, with more consumers switching from the top-end brands to mid-market or cheaper alternatives. Premium brands are under pressure to justify their higher prices and are stepping up innovation in formulations, fragrances and performance claims. But are consumers happy once they have switched to a cheaper alternative, and can they be persuaded to go back?

What have we found out?

- The detergent market overall has lost around 1 million consumers since 2005 (Mintel estimate based on TGI data), with a long-term trend away from using powder detergents (losing 1.8m consumers). Development of concentrated liquids has encouraged consumers to switch to these smaller pack sizes (liquids gained 0.9m consumers).
- Just over half of consumers use stain removers and the sector has gained almost 1 million new consumers since 2005, with some of these adding stain removers to their wash to ensure a good cleaning performance at lower temperatures; 14% of consumers worry that washing at low temperatures does not kill germs.
- The most important factors for purchasers, in order of importance, are brand and special offers (neck-and-neck for one fifth of purchasers), followed by low price and performance (also neck-and-neck for 14% of buyers).
- Seven in ten laundry buyers take the opportunity to stock up when there are special offers on laundry products, and promotions have persuaded over half of shoppers to switch brands.
- Almost 16m adults have traded down to a cheaper laundry brand in the last year, but do not necessarily opt for the very cheapest alternative.
- Consumers want performance from their laundry products and almost three in ten purchasers do not think own-label products perform as well as branded alternatives. These own-label doubters show a bias towards under-25s (40%).

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