

Department Store Retailing - UK - March 2011

Report Price: £1500 / \$2310 / €1793



What is this report about?

The department store sector is mature and has consolidated significantly in the last decade as the weakest players failed to compete effectively in today's marketplace. Mintel estimates that sector sales (based on statutory revenues) were worth £13.7 billion incl. VAT in 2010.

What have we found out?

- Over 19 million adults visit department stores regularly (at least once every 3 months) and 79% of those go on to buy regularly too. The frequent buyers are biased to women and the ABC1 35-54 year-old special group, while occasional shoppers draw more widely from the population at large.
- John Lewis has gained more shoppers than any other named retailer since 2006 during which time it opened just 5 new stores, four of which were the smaller 'at home' format. Buying levels have climbed by three percentage points, equivalent to an extra 1.5 million customers.
- Good quality is a key driver - almost half of all adults (some 23 million people) shop in department stores for the quality of the products on offer.
- More than a third of consumers (c.18 million adults) like the convenience of shopping for different brands and products under one roof and the AB socio-economic bias here perhaps reflects their cash rich time poor status.
- One in five (around 8 million adults) like department stores for their private label ranges and this rises to one in four ABs. Women are bigger fans of own label too.
- Being a bit pricey was the main reason for consumers occasionally rather than regularly at department stores. Predictably those agreeing with this statement were strongly biased to the under 25s and the lower socio-economic groups.

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