

Soap, Bath and Shower Products - UK - 2023

Report Price: £2195 | \$2995 | €2600

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This report looks at the following areas:

- How retail value sales in the soap, bath and shower category are affected by post-pandemic behaviour.
- How usage behaviours of soap, bath and shower products have been impacted by COVID-19 and the income squeeze.
- How brands can better position bar soaps to increase usage.
- How consumers prioritise low cost in comparison to other factors like sustainability when choosing a soap, bath or shower product.
- How consumers are changing their soap, bath and shower routines in line with the income squeeze.

Among soap, bath and shower product users, 80% think baths are a good way to relax, and 72% say the same about showers. This presents opportunities to extend wellbeing offerings beyond bath products with relaxing scents to include shower mists and neurocosmetic ingredients, as well as extend the meaning of relaxation to include playfulness with innovation in sweet scents and bright colours.

The cost-of-living crisis is already impacting the category, as 50% of SBS product users agree they have reduced the heat of the water they use for showering/bathing. As well as price locks and price matches on products, brands can support consumers with innovation in products designed to lather and rinse well in cool water and extol the virtues of cold showers/baths that include reducing stress and pain.

The category is threatened by savvy shopping behaviours brought on by the cost-of-living crisis and the risk that these will continue once inflation eases. Shopping on special offers and buying cheaper products is easy in the category, but brands can encourage trading up by meeting other purchase priorities of consumers like natural ingredients and sensitive skin claims, which are both prioritised by 38% of SBS product buyers.



“The soap, bath and shower category suffered a post-COVID-19 decline in 2021 and 2022, but 2023 will see value sales in the category steady. The income-squeeze is impacting bathing and purchase behaviours, and brands can underline value with large pack sizes and price locks in response.”

– Georgia Stafford, Research Analyst

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The opportunity to bring the skinification trend, which is already pronounced in the bodycare segment, is significant, especially considering 77% of SBS product users are interested in products that improve the appearance of skin. Brands can innovate in hand and body washes containing skincare actives like vitamin C, AHAs and hyaluronic acid.

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