

Summary

Ocado Retail aims to be the biggest online grocer in the UK. We helped them behave like a market leader, with agenda-setting and headline-grabbing data-driven storytelling to convey their scale, deep customer relationships and brand relevance.

Objective

MHP was briefed to safeguard and promote Ocado Retail's reputation and strengthen understanding of its offer through:

- Increased executive visibility and thought leadership
- Driving an increased, consistent share of voice in the media and financial markets

Strategy

Ocado Retail's success is often overshadowed by its owners, M&S and Ocado Group, which are led by superstar CEOs are category leaders in product and technology.

To build a distinctive voice and role for Ocado Retail, we focused on an area of clear ownership: The Customer.

We dug deep into their treasure trove of customer data and built an agile newsroom, which was first with consumer insights and which showed audiences Ocado Retail's playful and culturally relevant side.

By doing so, we helped establish them as a vital media commentator and challenged preconceptions about the brand as being a niche player for affluent shoppers.

We told these stories across every channel and at both a brand and leadership team level, to build further trust in the brand.

We also pulled these insights through to the business' financial communications, demonstrating to investors that Ocado Retail is building a strong relationship with its customers.

Method Deployed

Our storytelling model consisted of three key strands:

1) Data-led storytelling to position Ocado Retail as a key commentator on cultural trends and behaviors relevant to its customers

Throughout the year we used Ocado Retail's proprietary sales and search data to build both proactive and reactive stories which drove significant editorial coverage. Highlights include:

- The stellar growth of no and low alcohol ranges, driven by consumers amending drinking habits beyond Dry January, securing coverage in [This is Money](#)
- The rising popularity of 'fakeaways', as cash-strapped consumers switched to ready-meal alternatives, securing coverage in [The Times](#) and [MailOnline](#)
- The Clarkson's Farm Effect on sales of British produce, securing coverage in [Metro](#) and a host of retail trade titles
- The Orange Wine Boom, reflecting changing tastes of British wine drinkers, securing coverage in [The Guardian](#), [Metro](#), [Telegraph](#) and [MailOnline](#)
- The Return of Retro Crisps, amidst a summer of 90s nostalgia – a story that secured coverage 93 headline stories, including every UK national.



- Crémant – the new Sparkling King. Taking champagne's crown and scaring Prosecco, securing coverage in The Sunday Times and Daily Mail

2) Executive profiling to build trust in Ocado's leadership and humanise the brand

This activity centered around building the profile of CEO Hannah Gibson, who previously had done very little media. The storytelling focused on Hannah's passion for food and her industry leading commitment to small suppliers, helping us to show customers that Ocado Retail's values align with theirs. Highlights include:

- Feature in The Times about how small suppliers can catch the eye of Ocado Retail buyers, including an interview
- Detailed feature in The Sunday Times about how Hannah's eye for detail and passion for food has impacted the business

3) Product and business announcements placed exclusively with influential national journalists to maximise depth of message

We leveraged our media relationships to deliver a series of exclusives for key business announcements, securing widespread national media coverage that delivered across Ocado's three key message pillars of service, value and range. The work was also designed to convey Ocado Retail's ability to lead the market, supporting local producers and female entrepreneurs. Highlights include:

- Working with Sarah Butler at The Guardian on a feature about Ocado's new refill proposition
- Building a detailed feature in the Sunday Times with Lucy Tobin about the Range of Ocado's new Buy Women Built Aisle, which included an interview with Hannah Gibson
- Working with Josie Clarke at PA media to exclusively place an announcement about Ocado's new Buy British aisle, the largest of its kind in the country, leading to widespread coverage despite other supermarkets having already announced theirs.



4) Refresh of Ocado's financial communications

Since taking over responsibility we have implemented a more proactive approach to the brand's engagement with retail and business media.

This been reflected in increased engagement surrounding Ocado Retail's quarterly Trading Updates, and in our work to give Hannah Gibson her own voice and presence amongst retail correspondents.

This has strengthened understanding of the brand and its proposition amongst key opinion formers, resulting in increased positive, well-messaged coverage that shifts the focus away from Ocado Retail's owners and onto its own strategic progress, and what is ultimately an exciting UK growth story.

Impact

The first year of our work together has yielded record media results for Ocado Retail. In 2024 we:

- Secured 250+ pieces of proactive coverage for Ocado Retail, a new record for the brand
- Of this, there were 66 pieces of national coverage, another record

Meltwater analysis of the coverage found:

- Total potential reach was 15.4 billion, up 8% from the year before
- 94% of all coverage was positive or neutral in sentiment, compared to 69% in 2023. Overall sentiment score grew from 18 to 91, a 239% increase
- Overall share of voice against competitors increased by 25% against 2023

Our stories also directly increased revenue.

Sales of orange wine increased by 13% following our trend story, at a time when Ocado Retail was running no other promotions on the category, either above or below the line.

We have also driven improved consumer and shareholder confidence in Ocado Retail and Hannah Gibson, contributing to outstanding fourth-quarter results:

- Christmas sales increased by 175% to their highest ever level
- Revenue increased by 17.5%
- Volumes rose 17%