IGD Leadership Q&A

Thank you for the questions submitted during our Leadership Q&A session. We received a broad range of questions covering partnership, innovation, customer insight, value, execution and future growth opportunities.

Many of the questions centred around similar themes, so we have consolidated them below to provide clear and consistent responses for all suppliers.

Building Stronger Supplier Partnerships

How is Co-op improving engagement and collaboration with suppliers?

We recognise that a number of suppliers have experienced organisational changes over the last 12-18 months and have asked for greater clarity, consistency and accessibility.

We are focused on building stronger, longer-term partnerships founded on collaboration, communication and mutual growth. Our commercial structure has been designed to provide clearer accountability, improved decision-making and greater focus on supporting our existing supplier base.

We remain committed to listening to supplier feedback and creating opportunities for more meaningful conversations across our commercial teams.

How can suppliers make the most of the partnership opportunity?

We believe the strongest outcomes come when suppliers:

- Bring a deep understanding of convenience shoppers.
- Align proposals to customer missions.
- Use insight to support recommendations.
- Bring their best ideas to Co-op early.
- Focus on long-term category growth rather than short-term transactional opportunities.

Our ambition is to create partnerships that deliver value for customers, suppliers and Co-op alike.

Innovation & New Product Development

How is Co-op approaching innovation and NPD?

Innovation continues to be a major priority.

We want suppliers to bring us their best ideas, supported by clear customer insight and a strong understanding of convenience missions. Innovation that helps us better serve customers and grow categories remains central to our future plans.

Particularly exciting opportunities are those that support our four key missions:

- Top-Up
- Meal for Tonight
- Food-to-Go
- Treat

The most successful innovation proposals are those that clearly demonstrate Co-op customer relevance and support these missions.

What makes a successful innovation proposal?

The strongest opportunities typically:

- Solve a genuine customer need.
- Improve convenience.
- Drive category growth.
- Deliver customer value.
- Support Co-op's mission-based approach.

We encourage suppliers to bring evidence-led proposals supported by strong customer and category insight.

Understanding Co-op Customers

What customer opportunities should suppliers be focusing on?

Co-op serves approximately 24 million shoppers every year and has a unique position within convenience retailing.

We continue to see strong growth in convenience-driven shopping occasions, particularly:

- Top-Up missions
- Meal solutions
- Food-to-Go occasions

These missions represent significant opportunities for suppliers who can bring relevant products, innovation and category-thinking to support customer needs.

How important is customer insight?

Customer insight sits at the centre of our decision making.

We want suppliers to understand not only what customers are buying, but why they are shopping with Co-op and the mission they are trying to fulfil.

The more closely proposals are aligned to shopper behaviour and mission-based needs, the greater the opportunity to create winning solutions together.

Membership & Customer Engagement

How does membership support growth?

Membership remains a key differentiator for Co-op and continues to grow in both scale and engagement. Our focus is on creating stronger relationships with customers, encouraging frequency and delivering value through meaningful engagement.

For suppliers, this creates opportunities to:

- Better connect with customers.
- Improve relevance.
- Drive frequency.
- Support mission-based shopping occasions.

Value & Pricing

What is Co-op's approach to value?

We know value remains a key priority for customers.

Our focus is on delivering value in a way that is relevant to convenience shopping, supported by simple pricing, strong promotions and clearer in-store communication. We are continuing to invest in how customers experience value within our stores.

Value is about more than price alone. It also includes:

- Convenience
- Quality
- Trust
- Simplicity
- Ease of shop

Suppliers can play an important role in helping us strengthen customer value across each of these areas.

Growth Across Multiple Channels

Where are the biggest growth opportunities?

Co-op today offers suppliers opportunities across multiple routes to market, including:

- Co-op Food stores

- Quick Commerce
- Wholesale
- Franchise
- Co-op Media Network
- Co-op Partner channels

We encourage suppliers to think broadly about how their brands and propositions can unlock growth across multiple channels and occasions.

What role does convenience play in future growth?

Convenience remains one of the most attractive growth opportunities in UK food retail.

Our scale, customer reach and frequency of shopping missions create significant opportunities for suppliers that can deliver relevant solutions, innovation and strong execution.

Execution & Operational Excellence

How is Co-op improving execution?

Strong execution remains critical to delivering growth for both suppliers and Co-op.

Our focus is on:

- Better planning.
- Greater alignment across teams.
- Improved availability.
- Simplified ways of working.
- Faster decision making.

We will continue working closely with suppliers to identify opportunities to improve execution and deliver better outcomes for customers.

Key Takeaways

As we look ahead, three themes remain central to our approach:

Clarity

We are clear on our focus: growing our existing businesses, supporting our customers and building stronger supplier partnerships.

Connection

We are committed to better communication, stronger collaboration and ensuring suppliers can engage effectively with the right teams.

Commercial Opportunity

By combining customer insight, innovation, mission-led thinking and operational excellence, we believe there is a significant opportunity to grow together in convenience.

Thank you again for your partnership and for joining us at the Co-op Trade Briefing 2026. We look forward to continuing the conversation and working together to drive sustainable growth.