

Retail Groups Report

A great year for Gala

Gala Retail has had a strong year in 2021 with the group experiencing positive sales growth, announcing new partnerships, and delivering new footfall drivers and concept options for its retailers.

FOLLOWING a challenging year for the retail sector and other businesses in 2020, Gala Retail has enjoyed a strong 2021. A focus on innovation and responding to the changing trends of Irish consumers, while continuing to elevate the Gala brand through marketing activities, promotions and partnerships, has ensured that the Gala group continues to remain at the forefront of the sector.

The Gala group had a strong start to 2021, reporting a year-on-year sales growth of 10% in H1 of 2021, and 15% in the past 18 months. The Gala group has added 20 new stores to the Gala estate, eight new Gala stores and 12 new Your Stop stores, with a further 13 existing Gala stores undergoing refurbishment.

With over 250 Gala group stores in locations throughout Ireland, the Gala group has a presence in communities across the country.

New year, new partnership

At the beginning of the year, Gala announced its sponsorship of Ireland's number one network of children's activity camps, Starcamp. As commercial sponsor of Starcamp, the Gala group has committed to a two-year partnership that sees Gala named as the title sponsor.



Peamount United footballer Stephanie Roche, second from left, launched the Polar Plunge supported by Gala Retail, along with Special Olympics athletes, from left, Lorcan Tully, Eoin Tully and Edel Armstrong.



Gala Retail Inspirational Person of the Year 2021, Marion Mattimoe, is pictured with (l-r): Gary Desmond, CEO of Gala Retail; John McGloin, McGloin's Gala, Foxford; and Brian Tuffy from Tuffy Group.

'Starcamp with Gala Retail' camps and clubs, both virtual and physical, ran throughout the year, kicking off with virtual camps for St Patrick's Day and Easter and continuing throughout the summer, with 280 'Starcamp with Gala Retail' summer clubs taking place at locations across the country, with almost 30,000 children attending. Throughout the year, Gala has provided over €10,000 worth of prizes for participating children and their schools and the partnership is set to continue in 2022.



Fresh concepts

With fresh food offerings emerging as a key driver for consumers in recent years, Gala Retail continues to make fresh food a central part of its offering. This year, the Gala group has invested heavily in the expansion of its fresh food team and in the development of its exclusive range of in-store concepts. It has more fresh food executives per retailer than any other convenience symbol group, demonstrating the pivotal role of fresh food in convenience retailing and Gala's dedication to ensuring Gala retailers have access to innovative, modern concepts that set their stores apart from competitors and deliver quality, convenient, food-to-go options that will draw consumers into their local Gala store.

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This year Gala Retail launched its first Christmas ad, 'The Recipe'.

Gala Getaways

As 2021 was the year of the 'staycation', this summer Gala launched its 'Gala Getaways' store promotion which saw the group give away €40,000 of staycation gift vouchers to Gala shoppers to spend on a well-deserved getaway in Ireland. Customers spending over €10 in participating Gala stores were entered into a draw instore to win a €250 'Go Anywhere' gift card from IrelandHotels.com and the competition received hundreds of entries from Gala stores across the country, with one lucky winner being selected from each participating store.

Inspiration Awards

In October, Gala Retail teamed up with Virgin Media once again in a search for Ireland's most inspirational heroes. Inspirational people of all ages from across Ireland were nominated for the Gala Retail and Virgin Media Inspiration Awards, with 26 inspirational county heroes being named from a record-breaking number of entries that were received.

Each of the 26 award-winning heroes were recognised for the difference they have made to the lives of others with their selfless acts and inspirational deeds.

Special Olympics Ireland

Gala continues to support charity partner, Special Olympics Ireland, during a time when all charities are facing enormous shortfalls in their fundraising efforts. This year, Gala has supported the Special Olympics 'Let's Run' campaign, a 12-week programme which helped athletes and volunteers stay connected and improve their running ability and fitness.

In November, Gala announced its support of this year's Polar Plunge, assisting in the promotion of the event and funding branded merchandise for registered participants to help make this year's event bigger and better than ever. The event will help to raise much needed funds for Special Olympics athletes to help them get back to the clubs and sport they love.

Gala Retail gifted €26,000 of prizes to the winners, with 26 county winners being awarded with gift vouchers for IrelandHotels.com. Marion Mattimoe from Ballina, Co. Mayo, was named Overall Inspirational Hero of the Year in the Gala Retail and Virgin Media Inspiration Awards for her tireless work in her community.

Recipe for success: Gala's first Christmas advertisement

Gala has rounded off 2021 with the debut of its first ever Christmas advertisement, a heart-warming glimpse of a family's determination to uphold a sentimental Christmas tradition.

The film piece is titled 'The Recipe' and the story centres around a young girl, who with the help of her father, tries over and over again to recreate her late mother's famous Christmas cake recipe. Each new baking attempt brings another disappointing result, and another trip to Gala, until she receives a very special surprise gift on Christmas Eve. The ad was written and created by agency Verve|Showrunner and is running across digital and social media platforms in the run-up to Christmas.

Looking ahead to 2022

In 2022, Gala will continue to deliver value, choice and fresh offerings for its customers, while rewarding the ongoing loyalty of Gala customers through in-



Pictured at the launch of Gala Getaways are (l-r) Gary Desmond, CEO of Gala Retail; model Sarah Morrissey; and Kevin Mulvany, IHF/ IrelandHotels.com.



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store promotions and competitions. For retailers, the Gala group will continue to innovate with fresh branding, and growing its exclusive range of in-store concepts and offerings that will cater to the changing needs of customers in communities across Ireland.

The group will build on its existing partnerships with Starcamp Ireland and Special Olympics Ireland through a range of marketing activities that reinforce the brand's commitment to supporting Irish organisations and communities across the country. While Irish businesses will continue to face challenges as we navigate the ongoing and changing landscape as a result of Covid-19, following a strong 2021, Gala will build on this success with a focus on continuing to offer its customers value, quality, choice and unrivalled customer service in the year to come.