

# The FMCG Sector Is Entering a Pivot Period

“We’ve reached Autumn 2025, and if you’re anything like me, you’re wondering what to wear for the best - too cold in the morning, too hot in the day, and our office is a mini greenhouse (first world problems!) If anyone is in a freezing office, feel free to ‘hot desk’ in ours! In the meantime, read on to find out what’s making the FMCG sector pivot!”



**EMILIE GREGSON**  
FOUNDER

My last market update on recruitment in FMCG coincided with a change in NI, minimum wage, and employment law changes; this time it coincides with an upcoming budget, which keeps being delayed as the government drip feeds the market to test the water! I continue to play the lottery and hope for the best! In the meantime, though, I wanted to give you another update in the commercial space in FMCG to give you further insight into what the trends and market dynamics mean when it comes to recruitment

## So What’s Worth Knowing?

1. **Consumer priorities** are shifting (again!) from ‘more’ to ‘meaningful’.
2. **Retail channels** are fragmenting (digitalisation & AI).
3. **Legacy brand power** is weakening.
4. **Investing in potential** vs ready to hit the ground running... what do to for the best?
5. **Location** is still driving recruitment.



## Consumer priorities are shifting

Yes, again! There are a whole host of reasons for this shift, including economic pressure, health & wellness now being the baseline and not just a trend, ethical awareness has grown, consumers are more informed than ever before, and values are shifting.

From ‘more’ to ‘meaningful’...

**Past focus:** Convenience, indulgence, mass appeal.

**Now:** Value-for-money + health + sustainability.

## New consumer expectations:

- **Price sensitivity** due to economic pressure.
- **Health-consciousness** driven by long-term wellness trends and regulation.
- **Sustainability focus** consumers want brands to act on plastic waste, climate impact, etc. But does this always translate?
- **Trust & transparency** - clean labels, ethical sourcing, traceability.

Cost-conscious yet health-conscious consumers are looking for value-for-money, which really matters, but not at the expense of health or quality. Consumers are scrutinising labels, seeking functional benefits, and avoiding HFSS content.

Shoppers are more value and private label focused due to economic pressures, but they’re not looking for the cheapest, but value for quality. Private Label is no longer the cheap alternative with many FMCG businesses upscaling quality, design and story.

When it comes to recruitment, investing in highly capable marketing talent is key when it comes to brand storytelling to fight off category commoditisation and margin loss. It also helps to have a sales team who are genuinely passionate about what you do – storytelling is an art, and for those sales professionals who are only interested in the numbers, this change in market dynamics could see you fall behind if you only have a team that cares about the numbers!

### Retail Channels are Fragmenting

Traditional retail is no longer dominant. Quick commerce, social commerce and D2C are firmly on the rise. Physical stores remain critical, but omnichannel integration is now non-negotiable. Distribution strategy must now be agile, digitally connected and data-driven. FMCG businesses must invest in omnichannel presence and real-time delivery partnerships, optimising SKUs for quick-commerce formats.

### So what does this mean when it comes to hiring?

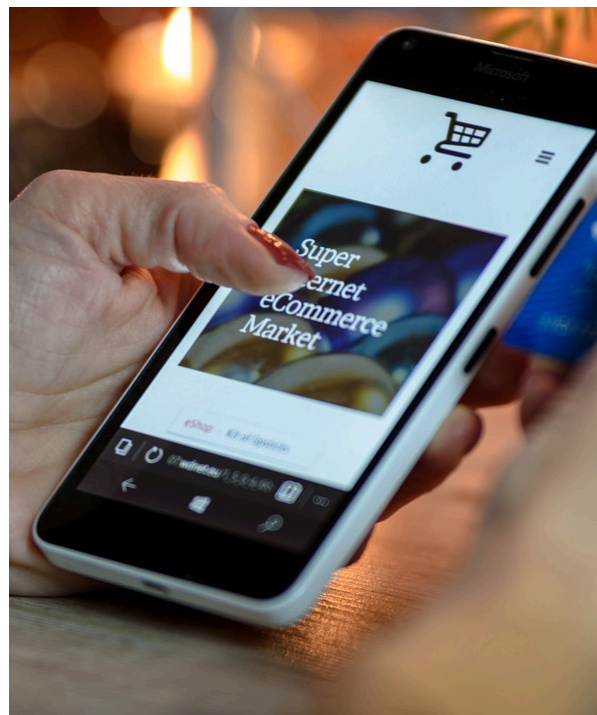
- Cross-functional collaboration is crucial
- Traditional commercial account management roles are shifting
- There is a demand for digital-first talent
- There is increased competition for talent

FMCG businesses must build direct relationships with consumers, personalise offers, and optimise sales teams who now need hybrid skills in both commercial acumen and digital fluency. Both sales, marketing and supply chain teams must be able to thrive in fast, matrixed environments capable of breaking silos and co-creating customer-centric journeys to win in today's world.

All of this leads to ensuring you have the right recruitment strategy when it comes to hiring. Whether you're doing it yourself directly or working with an external agency partner, it's going to pay to get it right!

Click here for a [10-step guide to selecting the right recruitment partner](#) for you if you decide to work with an external agency.

Or click here for a [DIY model](#) if you're recruiting directly.



### Legacy Brand Power is Weakening

With continued inflation squeezing household budgets, consumers are downtrading, choosing PL, smaller packs, or skipping non-essentials. The upcoming budget in November may reduce disposable income even further, so old strategies based on constant volume and price hikes won't work.

- Consumers are more willing to switch or try newer brands.
- Private label and D2C brands are gaining share by offering:
  - Lower prices
  - Functional benefits
  - "Authentic" branding
- Loyalty is earned more through value, ethics, and transparency — not just ad spend or availability.

Being a legacy brand is not enough anymore. Trust and relevance must be re-earned. Do you have the right people in place and diversity of thought to take your business to that next level?

Winning businesses will be those who can combine agility, digital integration, and value-led brand storytelling.

**This is the pivot**...from scale-driven, linear FMCG to a more **resilient, digital, consumer-centric** model.





## So how can you win when it comes to people and hiring the right talent? Do you invest in potential or buy readymade talent who can hit the ground running?



6 months ago, I talked about investing in potential, which, in my opinion, is the best talent strategy you can have for long-term sustainable growth.

However, in the fast-changing digital landscape, it will pay to bring in ready-to-rock talent, but with competition for this talent high, it comes at a cost and will likely stretch your budget. So, if your new fiscal runs calendar year and you're about to start your budgeting process, build this in and don't try to cut corners either. Buy right, buy once, and work with a partner who has the ear of this talent, especially as location is still driving recruitment.

We're continuing to see 3 days a week in the office becoming the norm for most FMCG businesses now, and there is a steady increase of organisations moving towards 4 days. Employees are also looking for more connectivity with their colleagues, and we're seeing more and more talent saying no to largely remote roles. That said, flexibility within those days spent in the office is high on people's priorities, so there is a real balance to strike here.



**“Recruitment is never easy; if it were, I wouldn't be here or writing this.**

Will you need to work with a recruitment partner every time you need to hire? No. But there are plenty of times when you'll need to and not all recruitment companies are made equal, so in the ever competitive war for talent in FMCG, it pays to get your choice of partner right too!



### How Can Signature Help?

At Signature, we provide growth-focused businesses the much-needed support to enable them to navigate the challenging FMCG recruitment landscape.

Our approach is entirely network driven, which drives efficiencies, pace and quality, time and time again. In a world where there is so much noise, and top talent is being bombarded with opportunities and AI-generated messages, you need access to passive talent where there is already a preexisting relationship.

If you'd like to chat about how we can help you leverage the advantage that a premium recruitment partner can deliver, discuss any of the topics raised in this article, or would like some expert support in implementing a talent strategy that promotes a proactive response to change, don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Emilie Gregson**  
Founder

**signature**  
Career  
Management