

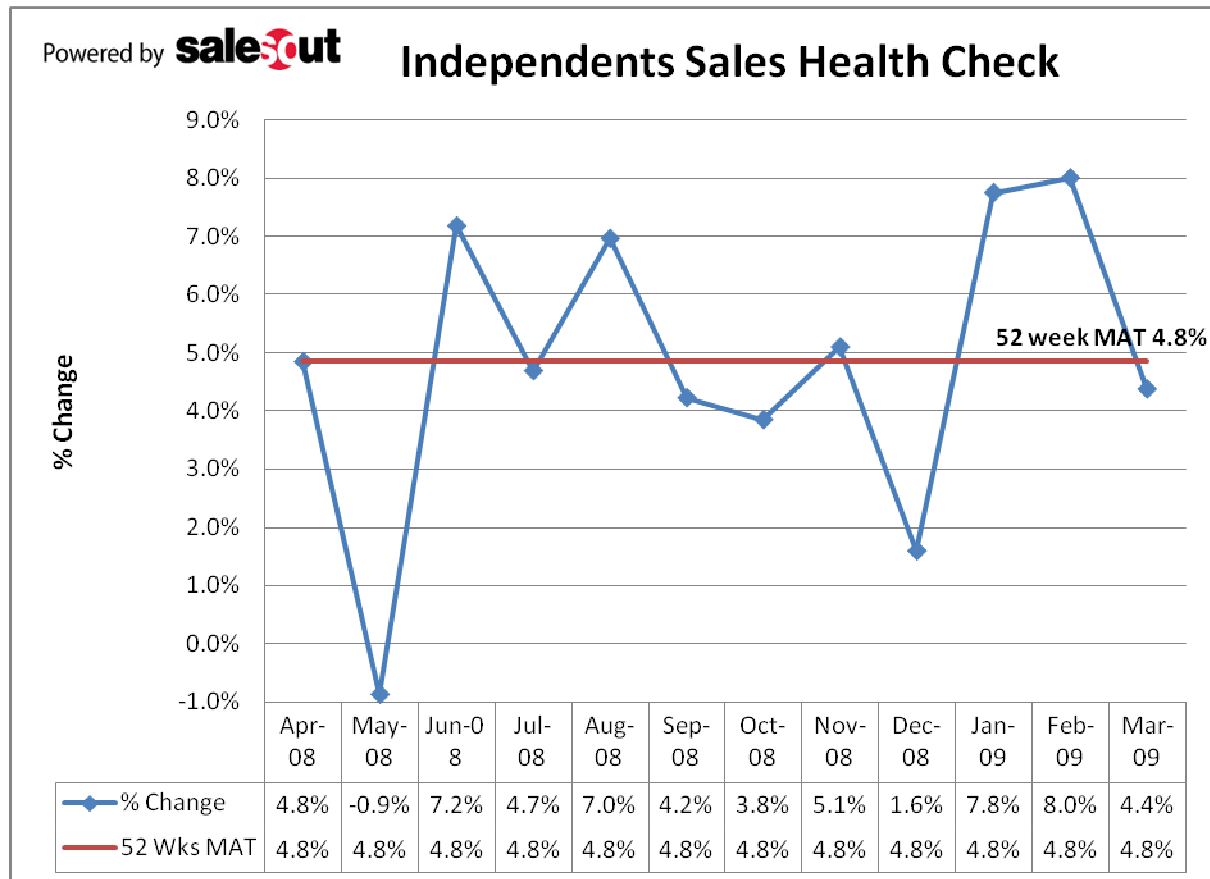
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Independent Sales Health Check – Powered by SalesOut

April 2009 – Independent sector health

The graph is populated by:
 Data for 5,000 independent stores
 3,000 of which are symbol stores

The graph shows:
 Like for like sales for April 08 – March 09
 And a 52 week Moving Annual Total



Steve Collins, Commercial Director, SalesOut

Like for like sales through the independent sector have been in positive growth in the last twelve months, contrary to predictions that the severe economic downturn and the subsequent “credit crunch” would adversely impact sales.

Apart from a small sales decline in May 2008, growth has remained buoyant throughout the last 12 months with the exception of November 2008 when sales growth fell to +1.6% - consistent with a general malaise in the UK economy. Overall, the independent sector remains strong and is achieving a Moving Annual Total growth of +4.8%.

This consistent growth is being driven by a consumer trend towards shopping locally, which is typical in a recession. Consumers typically react by replacing their weekly trip to the supermarket with multiple, smaller trips to an independent store, or by topping up at local stores in between trips to the supermarket, saving money through buying less and reducing fresh food wastage.

But despite signs of resilience, independent stores cannot afford to be lax. The multiples continue to pose a significant threat, with heavy discounting on branded products and national campaigns to promote their own product lines and recession-focussed deals. Independent stores must continue to

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focus on ever increasing store standards and their first hand knowledge of their local market to identify opportunities and ensure that they are stocking the right products in a professionally merchandised environment, supported by great customer service.

To ensure that the sector has access to reliable sales information, SalesOut will be providing regular updates to Convenience Store from a sample of over 5,000 independent stores including 3,000 symbol stores. With access to real sales data, independent stores can benchmark their range and sales against the industry as a whole.

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