

Shopper-driven strategies

Successful in-store department reinvention requires a 360° approach

While terms like “shopper insights” and “shopper marketing” have been common buzz words in business vocabulary for many years, we are just beginning to see both retailers and consumer product companies allocate resources to properly support shopper-focused initiatives. But even though we, at Big Red Rooster, are seeing more shopper-focused initiatives—particularly those aimed at shopper-driven department reinvention—we see many fall short because the companies sponsoring them are starting and stopping with learning about the shopper, and failing to look at the big picture beyond.

An understanding of the shopper is one win, but alone, it is simply not enough to drive success. It takes three wins to achieve large-scale reinvention of the shopping experience. Success is dependent on understanding the Reinvention Trifecta—the interrelationship between shopper, the consumer product company and the retailer. Often this requires a non-biased third party that can occupy a middle ground to develop a platform for a common language for all three.

A win for shoppers

Identifying the shopper's language often starts with an understanding of the decision process. As experienced consultants, we recognize this understanding can be achieved by conducting our own primary research or by collaborating with partners. Regardless of the approach used to gather insights, a clear understanding of the distinction between the shopper (who is purchasing) and the consumer (who is consuming/using) is a core component of the decision process that must be clearly identified and articulated. In some cases, this focus can open up an entirely new agenda for consumer product companies, which have typically been focused exclusively on the consumer.

A win for consumer product companies

In most cases, the consumer product company is truly the category expert. Yet we have found two main flaws in the way consumer product companies are translating that expertise. The first is that the robust metrics and benchmarks developed over years of study are rooted in what *was* or what *is*, rather than what *could be*. The second is that consumer product companies often have trouble thinking beyond their own brands when developing solutions for the retailer. Productive dialogue with retailers requires a forward-looking vision that grows the entire department, not just one specific brand. In some cases, developing a truly innovative vision requires companies within a department to join forces.

A win for retailers

Consumer product companies have historically spoken the language of distribution channels when working with retailers. Frequently, the result is one category solution for the entire channel, rather than retailer-specific solutions that are tailored to account for each retailer's unique growth strategy, positioning, merchandising guidelines, brand standards and shoppers. Successful reinvention begins by applying the strategic insights gathered from shoppers and the consumer product company to the development of a universal chas-



Source: Big Red Rooster's Reinvention Triecta®

sis—or strategic design foundation—that is then customized to individual retailers. The customization process should take the retailer's store and shopper segmentation into consideration. In addition, an understanding of the retailer's operational considerations must be balanced against the identified ideal shopper experience to ensure a positive return on investment for the initiative.

As retail professionals (and shoppers ourselves), we are excited about the new interest in shopper-focused initiatives and the potential for creating truly innovative shopper experiences. While there is no shortage of ideas, finding great ones that can be commercialized is impossible without cooperative interaction. When the solution scores a win for shoppers, consumer product companies and retailers, you have successful department reinvention. **DDI**

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