

Commercial Excellence Academy

by  Asbiverse Group

Optimizing Route to Shopper® Capability for Winning in Retail

www.commercialexcellence.academy

Route to Shopper®

A Strategic Framework for
Integrated Shopper-based Value
Creation in the Beauty Industry

Route to Shopper® Framework for Beauty

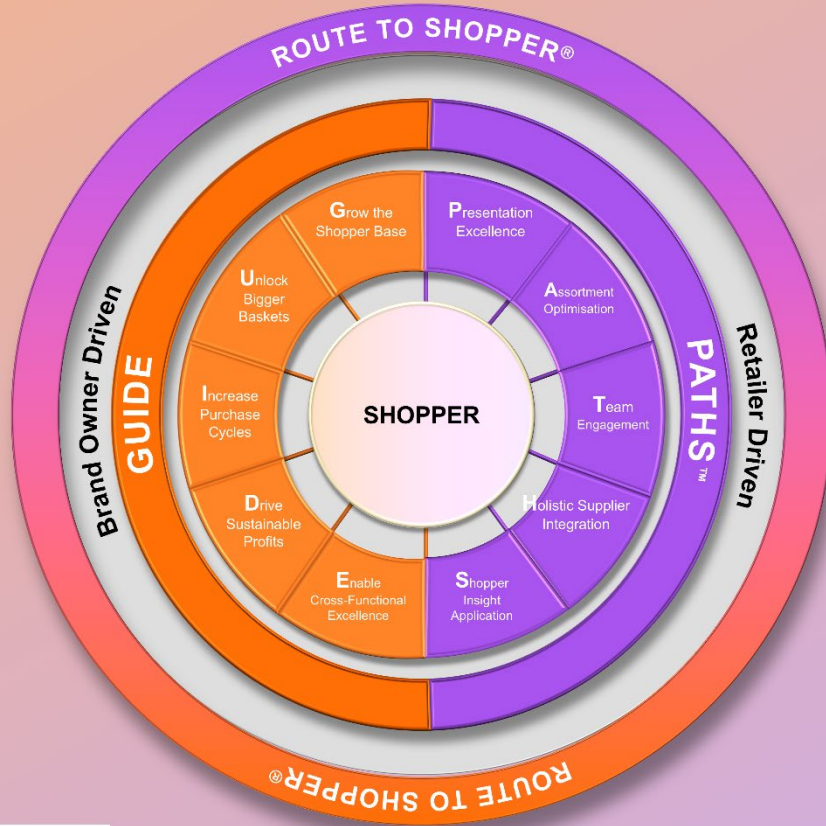
Transforming Beauty Commerce through Shopper-led Growth

A Strategic Positioning Document from the Commercial Excellence Academy

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Strategic Context	3
The Beauty Commerce Evolution.....	3
Beyond Traditional Beauty Marketing	4
The Shopper Distinction in Beauty.....	4
From Product Planning to Mission-based Activation.....	4
The Integrated Framework: GUIDE – PATHS™	5
GUIDE System (For Beauty Brands)	5
PATHS Framework (For Beauty Retailers).....	7
Strategic Alignment and Integration.....	8
Illustrative Potential Applications in Beauty	9
Potential Application: Omnichannel Skincare Strategy	9
Potential Application: Fragrance Trial and Gifting Strategy.....	10
Potential Outcomes from Route to Shopper® Deployments in Beauty	11
Enhanced Commercial Performance.....	11
Improved Beauty Organization Effectiveness	11
Sustainable Beauty Competitive Advantage.....	11
AI Enablement for Beauty Commerce	12
Enabling AI-generated Beauty Insights	12
Supporting AI-powered Beauty Decision Making	12
Facilitating Operation Within AI-enabled Beauty Retail	12
Role of the Commercial Excellence Academy in Beauty	13
Beauty-specific Capability Building.....	13
Collaborative Beauty Implementation	13
Continual Beauty Evolution.....	13
Call to Explore	14
Contact	14

The Route to Shopper® Framework incorporating GUIDE – PATHS™ for Beauty



Executive Summary

What does it really take to win a shopper's consideration in a world of endless options?

In the beauty landscape, winning with shoppers requires unprecedented levels of precision, personalization, and cross-channel fluidity. The **Route to Shopper®** Framework provides beauty organizations with a next-generation capability system designed to align brand aspirations, retail execution, and digital experiences around the modern beauty shopper's complex decision journey.

This strategic framework enables beauty brands and retail partners to create sustainable competitive advantage through Integrated Shopper-based Value Creation, transforming category management, commercial planning, and execution into a cohesive shopper-first ecosystem.

Strategic Context

The Beauty Commerce Evolution

The beauty industry faces unprecedented complexity in how shoppers discover, evaluate, and purchase products:

- **Fragmented Decision Journeys:** From influencer recommendations to in-store sampling, AR virtual try-on, subscription services, and social commerce, shoppers navigate multiple touchpoints before committing to beauty purchases
- **Channel Convergence:** Traditional distinctions between prestige, mass, specialty, and digital are blurring as shoppers seek value and experience across multiple formats
- **Personalization Imperative:** Shopper expectations for products, messaging, and experiences tailored to individual preferences, concerns, and identity have become baseline expectations
- **Omnichannel Reality:** The beauty shopper increasingly expects seamless experiences across physical retail, direct-to-consumer, e-commerce, marketplace, and social commerce channels

These dynamics create both opportunity and challenge for beauty organizations. Brands with sophisticated shopper understanding can create significant differentiation, while those lacking shopper-centric capabilities risk commoditization and declining relevance.

Beyond Traditional Beauty Marketing

Beauty has long excelled at consumer marketing, creating aspirational brand stories and product innovation. However, many organizations face challenges in translating brand strength into consistent shopper conversion across an increasingly complex retail landscape.

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework bridges this gap by providing a systematic capability approach that connects brand strategy to the point of purchase, where shopper decisions actually happen, whether in-store, online, or in hybrid environments.

The Shopper Distinction in Beauty

A fundamental principle underpinning our framework is the clear differentiation between:

- **Consumers:** Who use and experience beauty products
- **Shoppers:** Who make purchase decisions in increasingly complex environments

In beauty, this distinction is particularly crucial as purchasing often happens separately from usage, with significant gifting, replenishment, and regimen-building behaviours creating complex purchase patterns that may differ significantly from consumption patterns.

From Product Planning to Mission-based Activation

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework enables beauty organizations to pivot from traditional product or category planning to **shopper mission-based activation**. This transformation allows brands and retailers to:

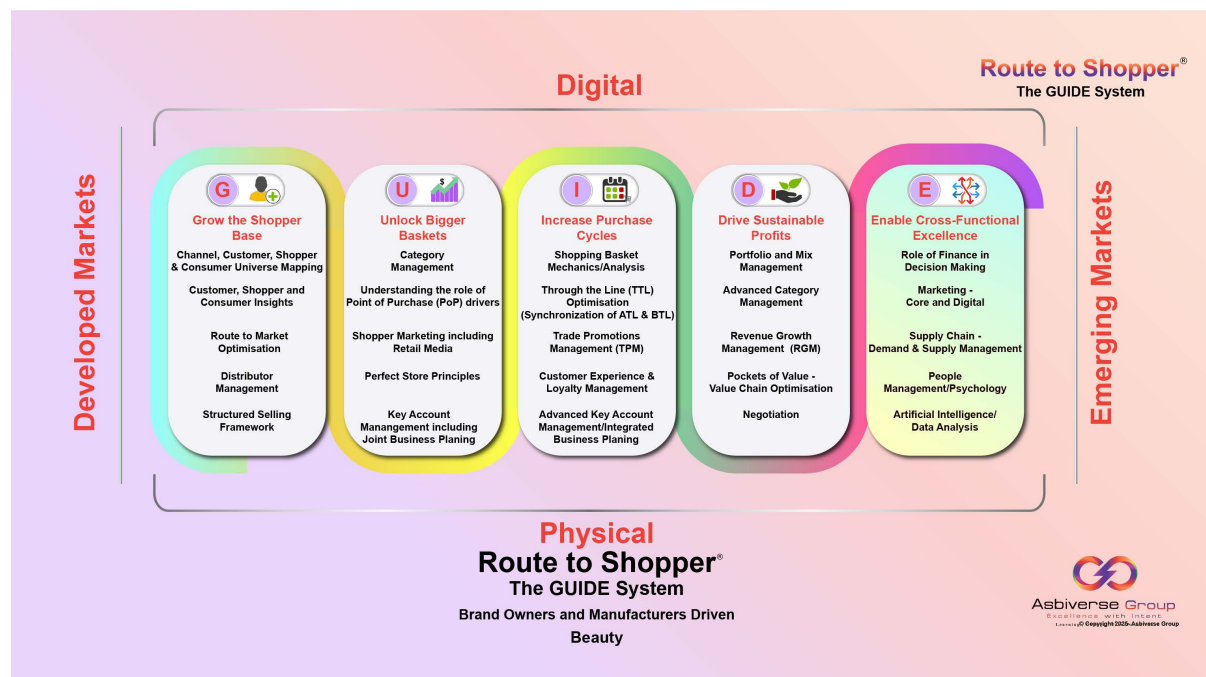
- Organize offers around regimen-building, occasion-based, and solution-seeking shopper missions
- Create seamless discovery-to-purchase journeys across physical and digital touchpoints
- Improve conversion through behavioural understanding and trigger activation
- Deploy resources more effectively by focusing on high-value shopper journeys
- Build sustainable differentiation through shopper-centred innovation and storytelling

This strategic shift transforms commercial planning from "product-out" to "shopper-in" approaches. It creates superior value for beauty shoppers, brands, and retail partners alike.

The Integrated Framework: GUIDE – PATHS™

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework consists of two complementary systems that create strategic symmetry between beauty brand owners and retail partners:

GUIDE System (For Beauty Brands)



The **GUIDE** framework provides beauty brand owners with a comprehensive capability system designed to drive shopper-based growth and value creation:

G: Grow the Shopper Base

- Mission-based shopper segmentation across skincare, colour, haircare, and fragrance
- New segment acquisition strategies across demographic and psychographic dimensions
- Expansion into emerging digital and physical channels based on shopper behaviour
- Digital discovery and education pathways that convert aspirational browsers to purchasers
- First-purchase conversion strategies that overcome beauty category trial barriers

U: Unlock Bigger Baskets

- Cross-category regimen-building approaches (e.g., skincare routines, styling systems)
- Strategic bundle creation based on beauty shopper missions and need states
- Complementary product strategies that enhance complete look or solution purchases
- Service and product attachment strategies for high-value beauty shoppers
- Advanced category management approaches for beauty portfolio optimization

I: Increase Purchase Cycles

- Replenishment triggers and reminder systems across beauty categories
- Seasonal and occasion-based re-engagement strategies to drive incremental purchases
- Loyalty and retention programs tailored to beauty category purchase rhythms
- Post-purchase engagement to reinforce usage and satisfaction
- Trade promotion strategies optimized for beauty shopper missions and timing

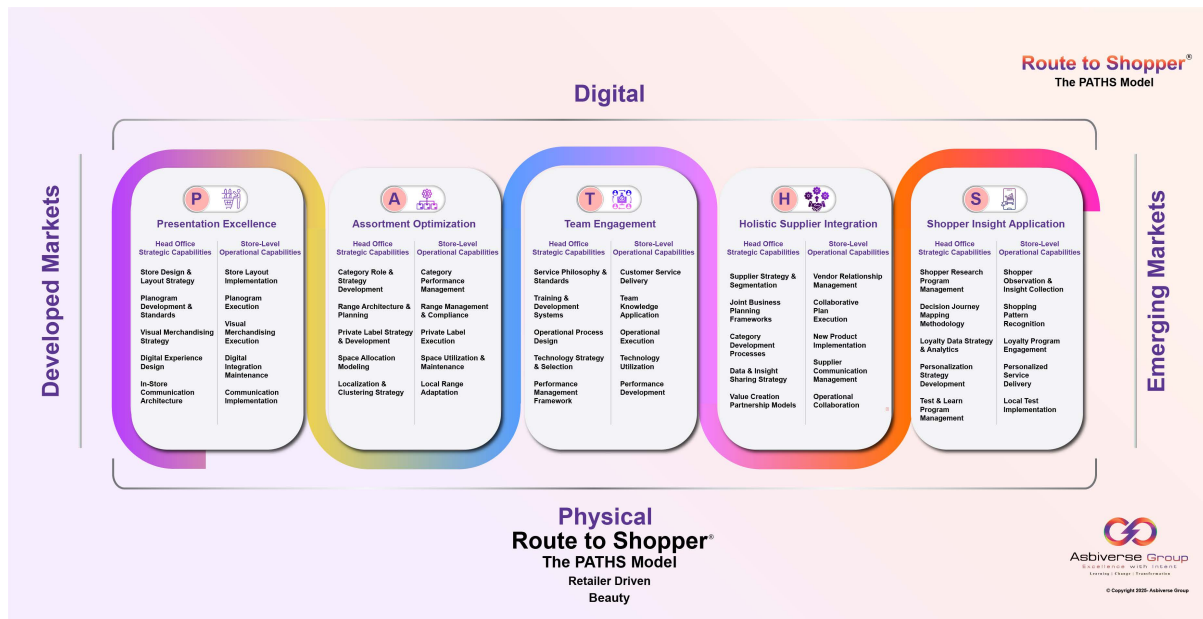
D: Drive Sustainable Profits

- Beauty portfolio optimization across price tiers, formats, and benefit segments
- Revenue growth management approaches for margin-enhancing mixes
- Innovation launch excellence that maximizes trial and conversion
- Optimal channel and retail partner strategies for different beauty segments
- Value chain optimization for sustainable beauty brand growth

E: Enable Cross-functional Excellence

- Integrated planning across marketing, sales, education, and digital teams
- Data and analytics capabilities tailored to beauty shopper understanding
- Cross-functional beauty experience design and activation
- Supply chain alignment for optimal product availability across formats
- Capability development focused on beauty-specific shopper engagement

PATHS Framework (For Beauty Retailers)



The **PATHS** framework provides beauty retailers with a comprehensive capability system designed to optimize shopper experiences and drive commercial performance:

P: Presentation Excellence

- Beauty-specific store design and layout principles for discovery and engagement
- Fixture and display designs that encourage trial and sensory experiences
- Visual merchandising strategies that communicate brand storytelling and regimens
- Digital shelf excellence for beauty categories across e-commerce environments
- Beauty-specific navigation systems for intuitive shopping journeys

A: Assortment Optimization

- Strategic curation aligned with shopper missions across beauty categories
- Trend-responsive assortment evolution that balances newness and core products
- Format-specific assortment strategies across flagship, specialty, mass, and pharmacy
- Exclusive and limited-edition strategies that create destination value
- Private label and brand portfolio complementarity in beauty categories

T: Team Engagement

- Beauty advisor capability development and certification
- Virtual consultation and digital advisor capabilities
- Product knowledge and regimen-building expertise
- Clienteling programs for high-value beauty shoppers
- Technology-enabled beauty education and recommendation

H: Holistic Supplier Integration

- Joint business planning tailored to beauty category dynamics
- Brand and retailer alignment on shopper experience standards
- Shared investment in beauty category growth initiatives
- Collaborative testing and learning approaches
- Data sharing frameworks for enhanced beauty shopper understanding

S: Shopper Insight Application

- Beauty-specific shopper research methodologies
- Try-to-buy conversion analysis and enhancement
- Loyalty data application for personalized beauty journeys
- Trend monitoring and responsive assortment evolution
- Test and learn programs for continuous experience optimization

Strategic Alignment and Integration

The true power of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework in beauty lies in how these systems work together:

- **GUIDE** defines how beauty brands win with the shopper through strategic planning
- **PATHS** ensures those strategies are executed effectively in-store and online
- Together they form a powerful **shopper-first value engine** for beauty commerce

This alignment creates strategic symmetry between beauty brands and retailers, enabling:

- Shared understanding of beauty shopper missions and purchase drivers
- Compatible capability development across the beauty value chain
- Synchronized brand storytelling and retail execution
- Mutual value creation through enhanced beauty shopper experiences

- Reduced friction, increased speed-to-market, and superior competitive positioning

Illustrative Potential Applications in Beauty

Let's explore how the **Route to Shopper®** Framework could be applied to drive growth in key beauty categories:

Potential Application: Omnichannel Skincare Strategy

Opportunity Area: A prestige skincare brand and specialty beauty retailer seeking to build complete regimens across physical and digital channels, enhance seasonal relevance, and reach new audience segments.

How the GUIDE Framework Could Be Applied:

- **G:** The brand could grow the shopper base by developing digital discovery pathways to attract skincare-curious audience segments with specific concerns
- **U:** Bigger baskets might be unlocked through strategically designed regimen bundles aligned to skincare concerns and benefit sequencing
- **I:** Purchase cycles could be increased by developing seasonal skincare triggers aligned with environmental and lifestyle shifts
- **D:** Sustainable profits would be driven through balanced innovation across hero products and regimen enhancers
- **E:** Cross-functional excellence could be enabled through integrated marketing, education, and retail execution teams

How the PATHS Framework Could Be Applied:

- **P:** The retailer might create intuitive skincare discovery zones with regimen navigation and digital integration
- **A:** Assortments could be curated around solution-based skin concerns with complementary product adjacencies
- **T:** Beauty advisors would be equipped with skin diagnostic tools and personalized recommendation capabilities
- **H:** Brand-retailer partnerships could develop shared content and education strategies across channels
- **S:** Loyalty insights might power personalized regimen recommendations based on skin type and concerns

Potential Value Creation:

- 25-30% potential increase in regimen-based purchasing

- 20-25% possible improvement in cross-channel conversion
- 15-20% potential growth in seasonal replenishment cycles
- Enhanced loyalty metrics and skincare authority positioning

Potential Application: Fragrance Trial and Gifting Strategy

Opportunity Area: A luxury fragrance brand and premium department store partner aiming to overcome sampling limitations, enhance gift conversion, and build year-round relevance beyond traditional gifting periods.

How the GUIDE Framework Could Be Applied:

- **G:** The brand could grow the shopper base by identifying and activating signature scent exploration and gifting missions
- **U:** Bigger baskets might be unlocked through complementary fragrance layering and luxury gift presentation add-ons
- **I:** Purchase cycles could be increased by establishing fragrance wardrobing concepts for different occasions and seasons
- **D:** Sustainable profits would be driven through strategic limited editions and concentrated scent formats
- **E:** Cross-functional excellence could be enabled through integrated development of sampling, merchandising, and digital tools

How the PATHS Framework Could Be Applied:

- **P:** The retailer might design multi-sensory fragrance discovery areas with innovative trial formats
- **A:** Fragrance assortments could be curated around recipient and occasion-based gifting missions
- **T:** Associates would be equipped with fragrance storytelling capabilities and personalized recommendation tools
- **H:** Brand-retailer partnerships could develop premium sampling programs and exclusive launch events
- **S:** Shopper data might inform personalized fragrance recommendation engines based on preference patterns

Potential Value Creation:

- 30-35% potential increase in trial-to-purchase conversion
- 25-30% possible improvement in gift purchase attachment
- 20-25% potential growth in repeat purchases through fragrance wardrobing
- Enhanced perception as a fragrance destination with superior discovery experience

*Note: These examples illustrate hypothetical applications of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework and the potential outcomes that might be achieved. Actual results would vary based on specific implementation, market conditions, and other factors.*

Potential Outcomes from Route to Shopper® Deployments in Beauty

Exploring and applying the **Route to Shopper®** Framework in beauty could potentially unlock transformative commercial value across multiple dimensions:

Enhanced Commercial Performance

- 20-30% increase potential in regimen adoption and cross-category basket size
- 15-25% improvement possible in brand conversion rates across touchpoints
- 10-20% potential growth in seasonal replenishment and reengagement
- 15-25% possible enhancement in premium and luxury trade-up conversions
- Significant improvement potential in new product launch velocity and scale

Improved Beauty Organization Effectiveness

- More effective alignment between brand marketing, education, and sales teams
- Enhanced collaboration between beauty brands and retail partners
- Channel-specific execution playbooks that maintain brand consistency
- More responsive adaptation to beauty trend cycles and seasonal shifts
- Better resource allocation toward highest-value beauty shopper missions

Sustainable Beauty Competitive Advantage

- More distinctive beauty experiences that enhance brand storytelling
- Stronger beauty shopper loyalty through personalized engagement
- More relevant innovations aligned with evolving beauty shopper needs
- Enhanced resilience in volatile beauty markets through mission-based planning
- Superior brand-retailer partnerships with mutual growth objectives

These are directional outcomes derived from similar framework applications and represent what might be achievable, not guaranteed results.

AI Enablement for Beauty Commerce

Route to Shopper® is inherently designed to help beauty organizations thrive in increasingly AI-enhanced commerce environments by:

Enabling AI-generated Beauty Insights

- Structuring beauty shopper missions for AI-powered segmentation and prediction
- Creating frameworks for AI-driven product affinity and regimen analysis
- Establishing beauty journey maps that enable predictive path modelling
- Developing structured approaches to beauty behavioural data that enhance algorithm effectiveness
- Building beauty-specific models that combine human expertise with machine learning

Supporting AI-powered Beauty Decision Making

- Enabling personalized beauty recommendations based on preferences, concerns, and behaviour
- Facilitating AI-driven trend identification and response planning
- Supporting automated beauty assortment optimization by mission and need state
- Enhancing forecasting through structured beauty seasonality and occasion drivers
- Creating frameworks for AI-assisted investment allocation across beauty touchpoints

Facilitating Operation Within AI-enabled Beauty Retail

- Preparing for image-based beauty product recognition and virtual try-on
- Structuring beauty content for voice-activated and conversational commerce
- Enabling computer vision applications for shelf compliance and shopper engagement
- Creating frameworks for real-time beauty offer personalization
- Developing mission-based approaches to automated beauty bundling and recommendation

Route to Shopper® ensures that AI is applied with deep beauty category understanding and aligned to real shopper needs and journeys. This approach keeps human artistry and beauty expertise at the core of every algorithmic decision.

Role of the Commercial Excellence Academy in Beauty

The Commercial Excellence Academy serves as the architect and global custodian of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework, with deep expertise in beauty shopper behaviour, brand activation, and retail excellence. Our approach focuses on:

Beauty-specific Capability Building

- Translating framework principles into beauty organization-specific capabilities
- Building sustainable skills that create long-term competitive advantage in beauty
- Developing cross-functional excellence through shared methodologies
- Creating integrated commercial systems rather than isolated beauty techniques

Collaborative Beauty Implementation

- Aligning beauty brand and retail partners around mutual value creation
- Facilitating joint capability development across the beauty ecosystem
- Creating "mirror-image" capabilities that enable synchronized execution
- Establishing shared measurement systems that drive continuous improvement

Continual Beauty Evolution

- Continuously evolving the framework based on emerging beauty shopper dynamics
- Incorporating advanced technologies and analytical approaches
- Adapting core principles to changing beauty purchase behaviours and preferences
- Maintaining the framework as a living system rather than a static model

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework serves as the "operating system" for connected beauty commerce, aligning brand teams, sales organizations, education specialists, digital expertise, and retail partners around the shopper's beauty decision journey.

Call to Explore

For beauty brand and retail leaders committed to breaking through commercial plateaus and establishing new competitive advantages, the **Route to Shopper®** Framework offers a compelling opportunity to:

- **Transform beauty planning** from product-centred to shopper-mission focused
- **Develop sophisticated capabilities** that create sustainable differentiation
- **Build stronger brand-retailer partnerships** based on mutual value creation
- **Deliver higher beauty commercial returns** with greater precision and scale
- **Create superior beauty shopper experiences** that drive loyalty and competitive advantage
- **Prepare for AI-enabled commerce** while maintaining beauty artistry and expertise

We invite you to explore how the **Route to Shopper®** Framework can become the foundation for sustainable, shopper-first growth in beauty. This approach connects brand aspiration to purchase conversion across the entire beauty ecosystem.

Contact

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