

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 Consumer
Packaged Goods (CPG)
Industry

Route to Shopper® Framework for CPG

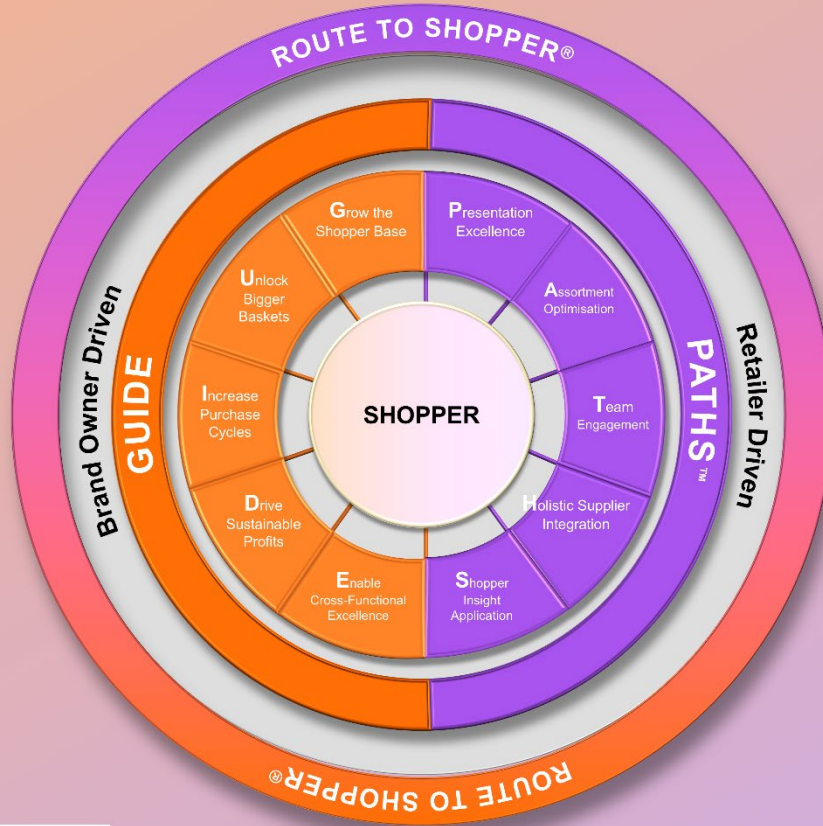
A Strategic Capability System for Integrated Shopper-based Value Creation in CPG

A Strategic Positioning Document from the Commercial Excellence Academy

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The Route to Shopper® Framework incorporating GUIDE – PATHS™ for Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)



Executive Summary

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

In the consumer goods landscape, winning at the point of purchase has become increasingly complex. The **Route to Shopper®** Framework represents a next-generation capability system designed to create sustainable competitive advantage through Integrated Shopper-based Value Creation.

This strategic framework aligns brand owners and retail partners around a shared understanding of shopper decision journeys, creating synchronized strategies that drive mutual growth and enhanced profitability.

Strategic Context & Purpose

Beyond Traditional Commercial Approaches

Traditional commercial strategies often operate in silos, with brand owners focusing on consumer marketing and product development while retailers concentrate on store operations and category management. This disconnection creates significant value leakage at the most critical moment: when shoppers make purchase decisions.

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework transforms this paradigm by establishing a synchronized commercial system that aligns all activities around the shopper's decision journey, enabling CPG brands and retailers to collaborate effectively to win at the crucial point of purchase.

The Shopper Distinction

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

- **Consumers:** Who use and experience the product
- **Shoppers:** Who make purchase decisions and navigate buying environments

While many organizations focus primarily on consumer needs, the critical moment of truth occurs at the point of purchase, where **shopper decisions** determine commercial success. By developing sophisticated capabilities to influence these decisions, organizations can unlock significant untapped value.

This distinction is particularly crucial in CPG, where purchase decisions are often made in seconds, influenced by complex factors including occasion, need state, household dynamics, and competitive alternatives. The most sophisticated consumer understanding has limited commercial impact if it fails to translate into shopper-centric activation at the moment of truth.

From Category Planning to Shopper Mission Activation

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

- Develop more relevant offerings aligned with shopper purchase motivations
- Create seamless experiences 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

This strategic shift transforms commercial planning from "what we want to sell" to "how shoppers want to buy". It creates mutual value for shoppers, brands, and retailers.

Future-ready for AI-facilitated Retail

Route to Shopper® is inherently future-ready, designed to enable organizations to operate effectively in both insight-led and increasingly AI-facilitated retail environments. The framework's structured approach to understanding shopper decisions provides the perfect foundation for:

- Leveraging AI-powered shopper segmentation and preference modelling
- Deploying predictive analytics to anticipate shopper needs and behaviors
- Activating real-time personalization across digital and physical touchpoints
- Optimizing resource allocation through AI-driven scenario planning
- Maintaining human-centred value creation even as technology evolves

By aligning around the shopper's decision journey, organizations can ensure that emerging technologies enhance rather than replace the human elements of the shopping experience.

The Integrated Framework: GUIDE – PATHS™

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework for Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) consists of two complementary systems that create strategic symmetry between brand owners and retailers:

GUIDE System (For Brand Owners)



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

G: Grow the Shopper Base

- Universe mapping to identify opportunity spaces across categories and channels
- Mission-based segmentation that aligns with shopper purchase motivations
- Strategic route-to-market optimization for omnichannel environments
- Effective distributor and e-commerce platform management
- Structured selling methodologies that drive conversion at point of purchase

U: Unlock Bigger Baskets

- Sophisticated category management approaches that enhance cross-selling
- Strategic point-of-purchase activation aligned with shopper missions

- Integrated shopper marketing and retail media for seamless activation
- Perfect store execution principles for physical and digital environments
- Advanced key account management strategies for collaborative growth

I: Increase Purchase Cycles

- Shopping basket analysis to identify frequency drivers and barriers
- Synchronized above and below-the-line marketing to maintain engagement
- Trade promotion optimization for sustainable growth and loyalty
- Customers experience enhancement across the purchase journey
- Integrated business planning that drives repurchase and category participation

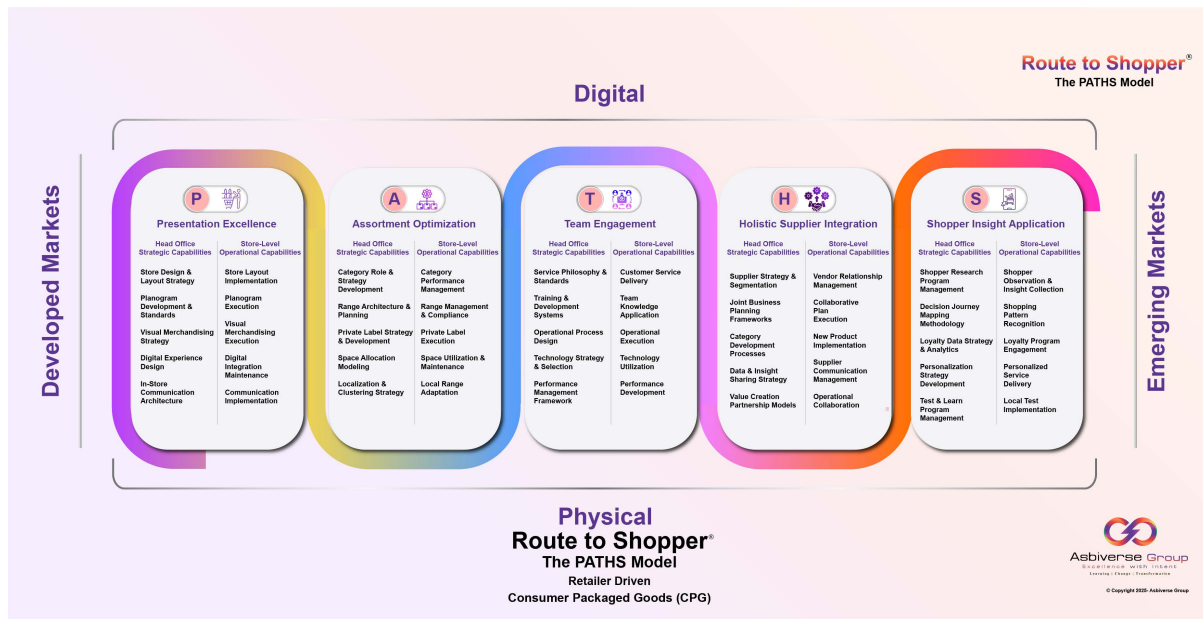
D: Drive Sustainable Profits

- Strategic portfolio and mix management optimized for profitability
- Advanced category management capabilities that enhance margin
- Revenue growth management sophistication for optimal price-pack architecture
- Value chain optimization for operational efficiency and cost advantage
- Strategic negotiation frameworks that create mutual value with retail partners

E: Enable Cross-functional Excellence

- Finance integration for ROI-driven commercial decision-making
- Marketing excellence across traditional, digital, and emerging channels
- Supply chain optimization for seamless execution and availability
- People management strategies that enhance commercial capabilities
- AI and data analytics integration that drives competitive advantage in planning and execution

PATHS Model (For Retailers)



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

P: Presentation Excellence

- Strategic store design and shelf activation principles for maximum impact
- Planogram development and execution standards optimized by mission
- Visual merchandising strategies that enhance shopper engagement
- Digital shelf and e-commerce experience design for seamless navigation
- In-store communication architecture that guides purchase decisions

A: Assortment Optimization

- Category role and strategy development aligned with shopper missions
- Range architecture frameworks that curate ideal mixes by need state
- Private label strategies for differentiation, loyalty, and enhanced margins
- Space allocation modelling based on shopper decision hierarchies
- Localization approaches that enhance relevance to specific markets

T: Team Engagement

- Service philosophy and standards development for shopper-centric culture
- Training systems that build differentiated shopper engagement capabilities

- Operational process design for consistent execution and conversion
- Technology strategies that enhance associate-shopper interactions
- Performance management frameworks that drive shopper satisfaction

H: Holistic Supplier Integration

- Supplier segmentation and strategic partnership development
- Joint business planning frameworks for collaborative growth
- Category development partnerships that enhance shopper value
- Data and insight sharing that improves shopper-based decision-making
- Shared investment models that optimize shopper experience delivery

S: Shopper Insight Application

- Sophisticated shopper research and analytics methodologies
- Decision journey mapping for deeper understanding of purchase behaviour
- Loyalty data strategies that enable personalization and targeting
- AI-powered test and learn programs that drive continuous optimization
- Local implementation approaches that adapt to market-specific behaviors

Strategic Alignment and Integration

The true power of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework lies in how these systems work together to create synchronized strategies and execution:

- **GUIDE** defines how 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**, fit for the age of digital transformation

This alignment creates strategic symmetry between brand owners and retailers, enabling:

- Shared understanding of shopper needs, behaviors, and purchase missions
- Compatible capability development and deployment across the value chain
- Synchronized commercial planning and omnichannel execution
- Mutual value creation through enhanced shopper experiences at every touchpoint
- Reduced friction, increased speed-to-market, and superior competitive positioning

Illustrative Potential Applications in CPG

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

Potential Application: Breakfast Cereals

Opportunity Area: A cereal manufacturer and grocery retail partner looking to revitalize category growth, increase household penetration in health-conscious segments, and differentiate in a competitive breakfast landscape.

How the GUIDE Framework Could Be Applied:

- **G:** The brand could grow the shopper base by mapping health-conscious family breakfast missions and developing targeted approaches for these high-value segments
- **U:** Bigger baskets could be unlocked through strategic cross-category promotions with complementary items like milk, fruit, and breakfast beverages
- **I:** Purchase cycles might be increased through seasonal variations and expanding usage occasions beyond morning consumption
- **D:** Sustainable profits could be driven through optimized price-pack architecture and premium nutritional offerings
- **E:** Cross-functional excellence would be enabled through integrated marketing, nutrition science, and retail activation teams

How the PATHS Framework Could Be Applied:

- **P:** The retailer could create dedicated healthy breakfast zones with cohesive merchandising and nutritional navigation systems
- **A:** Complementary items could be bundled through strategic adjacencies and cross-category solution displays
- **T:** Store representatives might be trained on nutritional benefits and wellness propositions for different shopper segments
- **H:** Brand-retailer partnerships could develop family-themed marketing and educational content across digital and physical touchpoints
- **S:** Loyalty insights could be applied for personalized offers based on household composition and nutritional preferences

Potential Value Creation:

- 15-20% potential increase in health-segment household penetration
- 20-25% possible improvement in basket attachment with complementary categories

- 10-15% potential growth in overall breakfast category profitability
- Enhanced repeat purchase frequency among targeted segments

Potential Application: Personal Care Products

Opportunity Area: A premium skincare brand and beauty retailer seeking to elevate category engagement, increase purchase frequency, and capture greater share of growing wellness and self-care missions.

How the GUIDE Framework Could Be Applied:

- **G:** The brand could grow the shopper base by mapping skincare need states and identifying regimen-building opportunities
- **U:** Bigger baskets might be unlocked through complementary product systems based on comprehensive skincare routines
- **I:** Purchase cycles could be increased by activating seasonal skincare needs and premium gifting occasions
- **D:** Sustainable profits would be driven through innovation focused on high-value skincare concerns
- **E:** Cross-functional excellence could be enabled through integrated product development, digital content, and retail activation

How the PATHS Framework Could Be Applied:

- **P:** The retailer might design immersive beauty zones with curated displays and digital education tools
- **A:** Trend-driven assortments could feature solution-based merchandising and trial-size discovery sets
- **T:** Beauty advisors would be equipped with skincare diagnostic tools and personalized recommendation capabilities
- **H:** Brand-retailer partnerships could implement joint beauty events and expert consultations across channels
- **S:** AI-based shopper targeting might match skincare solutions with specific skin concerns and preferences

Potential Value Creation:

- 20-25% potential increase in regimen-based purchasing (multiple items)
- 30-35% possible growth in premium gifting during key seasonal periods
- 25-30% potential improvement in repeat purchase rates through consultation experiences
- Enhanced category loyalty and share of wallet metrics

*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 Adopting Route to Shopper® in CPG

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

Enhanced Commercial Performance

- 15-20% uplift potential in cross-category attach rates through mission-led planning
- 12-25% increase in basket size through complementary product strategies
- 8-14% improvement in promotional ROI through shopper-targeted execution
- 10-18% growth in category profitability through optimized mix and margin management
- Significant improvement in new product launch effectiveness and speed-to-scale

Improved Organizational Effectiveness

- Faster, more aligned cross-functional execution through shared shopper focus
- More effective resource allocation directed toward highest-value shopper missions
- Enhanced collaboration between brand marketing, category management, and sales
- Reduced implementation friction through synchronized planning methodologies
- Greater agility in responding to emerging trends and competitive activity

Sustainable Competitive Advantage

- Distinctive shopper experiences that create meaningful differentiation
- More relevant innovations aligned with evolving shopper needs and missions
- Stronger brand-retailer collaboration with shared ownership of shopper outcomes
- Enhanced resilience in volatile markets through mission-based planning

- Superior shopper loyalty metrics leading to sustainable growth advantages

These are directional outcomes drawn from similar applications across sectors and represent what is commercially possible, not guaranteed.

AI Readiness & The Future of Shopper Engagement

Route to Shopper® goes beyond traditional shopper insight. It empowers CPG organizations to operate effectively within an increasingly AI-facilitated commerce ecosystem by:

Enabling AI-generated Insights

- Structuring shopper missions for AI-enhanced segmentation and prediction
- Creating frameworks for AI-driven basket analysis and purchase pattern recognition
- Establishing shopper journey maps that enable predictive path modelling
- Developing structured approaches to behavioural data that enhance algorithm effectiveness
- Building integrative models that combine human insight with machine learning

Supporting AI-powered Decision Making

- Enabling dynamic pricing optimization aligned with shopper value perception
- Facilitating AI-driven promotion design and personalization
- Supporting automated assortment optimization by mission and need state
- Enhancing demand forecasting through structured behavioural drivers
- Creating frameworks for AI-assisted resource allocation and ROI prediction

Facilitating Operation Within AI-enabled Retail

- Preparing for image-based product recognition and recommendations
- Structuring content for voice-activated and chatbot-based commerce
- Enabling computer vision applications for shelf compliance and intervention
- Creating frameworks for real-time offer and content personalization
- Developing mission-based approaches to automated bundling and display strategies

Route to Shopper® ensures that AI is not used in isolation but aligned to real shopper needs and journeys. This approach keeps human intent and value creation at the core of every algorithmic decision.

Role of the Commercial Excellence Academy

The Commercial Excellence Academy is the architect and global custodian of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework, embedding it across industries as a capability transformation engine. Our approach focuses on:

Strategic Capability Building

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

Collaborative Implementation

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

Sustainable Evolution

- Continuously evolving the framework based on emerging market dynamics
- Incorporating advanced technologies and analytical approaches
- Adapting core principles to changing shopper behaviors 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 commerce, aligning commercial teams, AI tools, and retail partners around the shopper's decision journey to create superior commercial outcomes.

Call to Explore

For CPG 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 commercial 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 commercial returns** with greater precision and scale
- **Create superior shopper experiences** that drive loyalty and competitive advantage
- **Prepare for AI-enabled commerce** while maintaining human-centred value creation

We invite you to explore how the **Route to Shopper®** Framework can become the foundation for sustainable, AI-ready, shopper-first growth in an increasingly complex commercial landscape.

Contact

Strategic Partnerships Team

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