

Commercial Excellence Academy
by  Asbiverse Group

— Optimizing Route to Shopper® Capability for Winning in Retail —

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Route to Shopper®

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

Route to Shopper® Framework for Food Ingredients

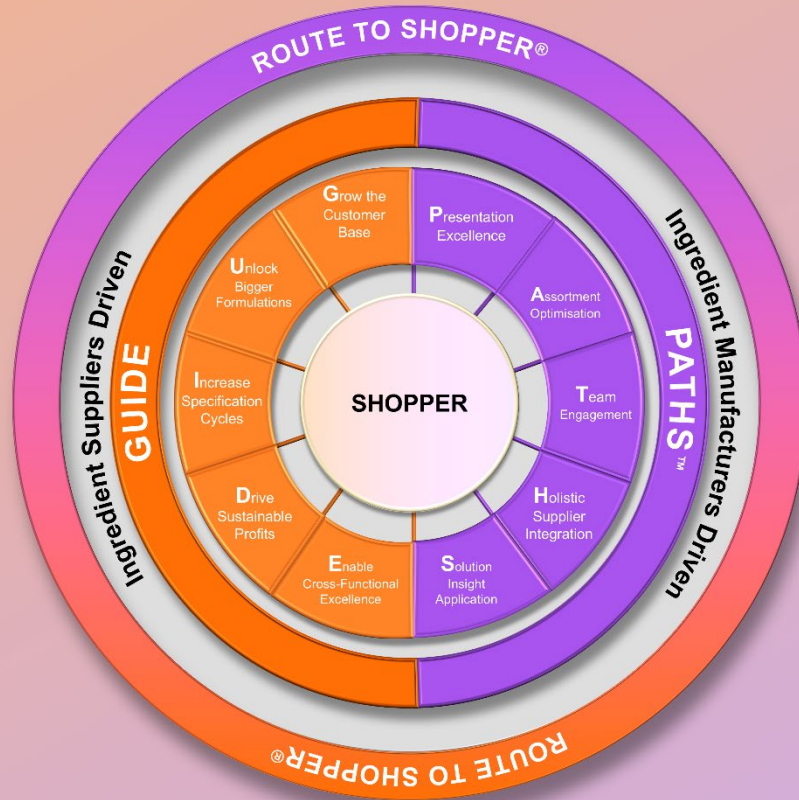
A Strategic Framework for Enabling Ingredient-led Value Creation

A Strategic Positioning Document from the Commercial Excellence Academy

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The Route to Shopper® Framework incorporating GUIDE – PATHS™ for Food Ingredients Industry



Strategic Context

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

In today's complex food and beverage landscape, ingredient suppliers face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Rising consumer demands for clean label, functionality, sustainability, and nutrition have transformed the role of ingredients from commodity inputs to strategic enablers of innovation and differentiation.

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework provides a comprehensive commercial capability system that enables food ingredient suppliers to transcend traditional technical selling approaches and build multi-dimensional value propositions aligned with evolving customer needs. By connecting ingredient functionality to consumer preferences and retail trends, this framework creates a powerful bridge between technical features and commercial outcomes.

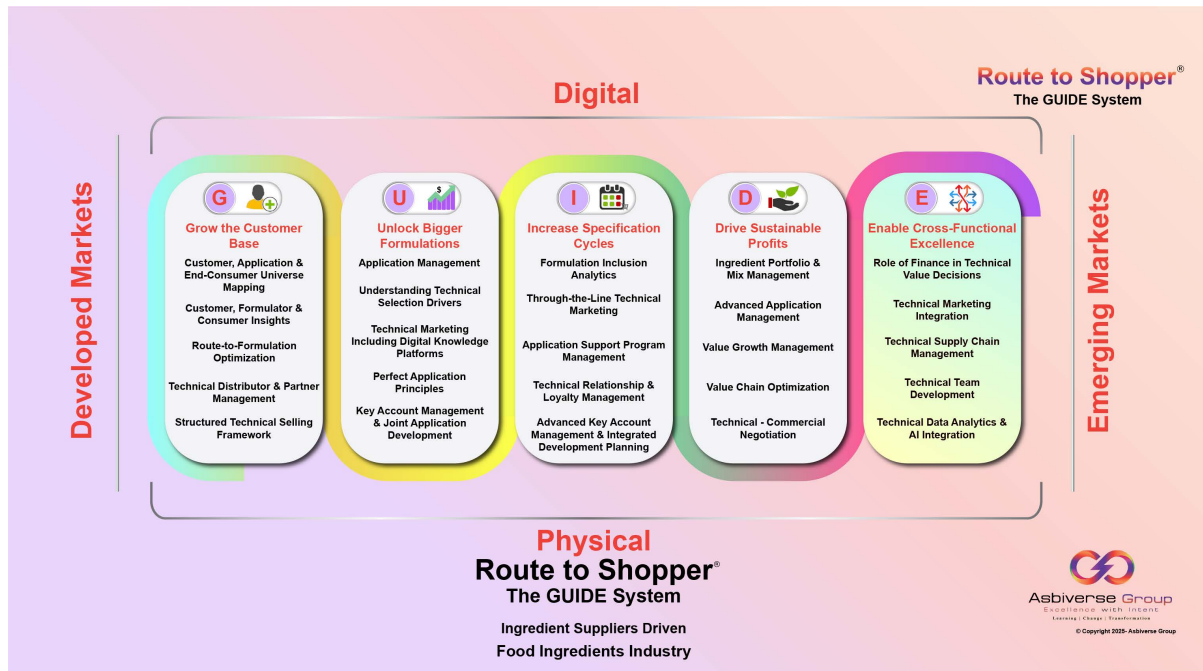
Route to Shopper® represents a paradigm shift from transaction-focused ingredient supply to transformative value partnerships. It unlocks category innovation, co-development relationships, and execution excellence from ingredient specification to retail shelf. This dual-perspective framework acknowledges the unique dynamics of B2B ingredient relationships while maintaining clear sight of the ultimate B2C consumer impact.

Key Market Dynamics Addressed:

- Acceleration of consumer-driven reformulation demands
- Increasing complexity of multi-stakeholder ingredient selection
- Growing sophistication of technical-commercial alignment requirements
- Rising importance of substantiated claims and regulatory readiness
- Evolution toward collaborative innovation and co-creation partnerships

GUIDE – PATHS™ Frameworks for the Food Ingredients Sector

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework consists of two complementary perspectives that together create a holistic approach to commercial excellence:



GUIDE Framework (Primary Audience: Ingredient Suppliers)

G: Grow the Customer Base

- **Focus:** Expanding reach across food & beverage manufacturers through technical application mapping, customer segmentation, and structured selling approaches.
- **Strategic Impact:** Transforms technical capabilities into customer-specific value propositions that address formulation challenges, consumer trends, and competitive differentiation opportunities.

U: Unlock Bigger Formulations

- **Focus:** Increasing inclusion rates and application breadth through application management, technical selection drivers, and perfect application principles.
- **Strategic Impact:** Expands ingredient solution footprint beyond single components to integrated functional systems that enhance overall formulation performance and consumer experience.

I: Increase Specification Cycles

- **Focus:** Building recurring formulation inclusion through analytics, technical relationship management, and application support programs.
- **Strategic Impact:** Creates sustainable preference and loyalty through systematic technical service excellence, proactive problem-solving, and continuous innovation support.

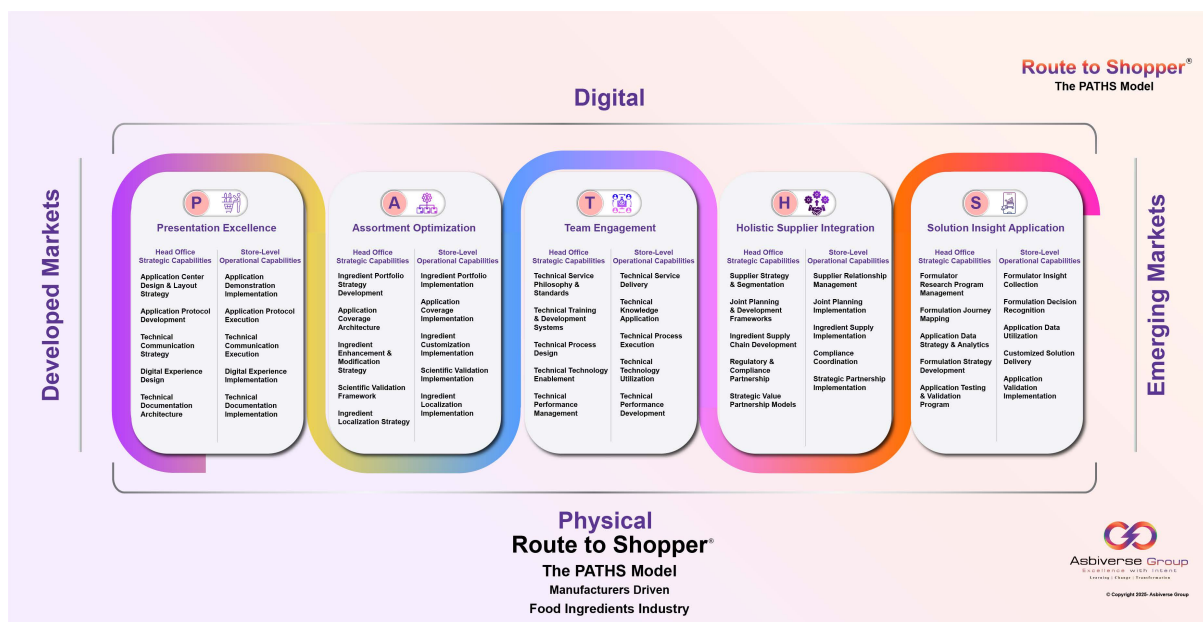
D: Drive Sustainable Profits

- **Focus:** Optimizing the value chain and pricing structure through portfolio management, value growth initiatives, and technical-commercial negotiation.
- **Strategic Impact:** Shifts conversations from price to value by quantifying performance benefits, formulation advantages, and end-product differentiation potential.

E: Enable Cross-functional Excellence

- **Focus:** Integrating technical, regulatory, and commercial capabilities through finance integration, technical marketing, supply chain management, and team development.
- **Strategic Impact:** Breaks down traditional silos between R&D, regulatory, marketing, and sales to create seamless customer experiences and accelerated innovation cycles.

PATHS Framework (Primary Audience: Manufacturers)



P: Presentation Excellence

- **Focus:** Optimal ingredient application and technical demonstration through testing protocols, documentation architecture, and digital experience design.
- **Strategic Impact:** Creates compelling, evidence-based demonstrations that translate complex technical advantages into tangible application benefits.

A: Assortment Optimization

- **Focus:** Strategic ingredient portfolio management through application coverage, scientific validation, and ingredient enhancement strategies.
- **Strategic Impact:** Enables targeted solution development based on application requirements, performance standards, and customer innovation priorities.

T: Team Engagement

- **Focus:** Technical and commercial team alignment through service standards, knowledge application, and technical performance management.
- **Strategic Impact:** Develops hybrid technical-commercial expertise that bridges scientific understanding with business impact communication.

H: Holistic Supplier Integration

- **Focus:** Collaborative innovation and supply partnerships through joint planning, regulatory compliance coordination, and strategic value partnerships.
- **Strategic Impact:** Transforms transactional supplier relationships into strategic innovation partnerships that accelerate development cycles and market responsiveness.

S: Solution Insight Application

- **Focus:** Translating consumer needs to ingredient specifications through formulator research, journey mapping, and application testing validation.
- **Strategic Impact:** Connects market trends to technical requirements, creating innovation platforms that address emerging consumer demands before they become mainstream.

Hypothetical Illustrations

Hypothetical Scenario 1: Functional Ingredients in Better-for-you Snacks

Hypothetical Situation: A functional ingredient supplier might struggle to gain traction beyond basic formulation inclusion in a growing better-for-you snack segment. Despite potentially having superior technical performance, such ingredients could become commoditized and specified at minimum levels.

Potential Guide Impact:

- **G:** Could expand customer base by mapping application-specific technical challenges across snack categories and developing targeted value propositions for wellness-focused brands.
- **U:** Might create bundled solutions combining functional ingredients with complementary texture and stability systems, potentially unlocking broader formulation possibilities.
- **I:** Could implement systematic application support programs that might accelerate innovation cycles and strengthen specification retention.
- **D:** Might develop value-based pricing models that quantify consumer preference improvement and enable premium positioning.
- **E:** Could integrate R&D, regulatory, and commercial teams to provide seamless support from concept to commercialization.

Potential Paths Impact:

- **P:** Could develop demonstration protocols with scientific substantiation that visualize consumer benefits.
- **A:** Might optimize solution portfolios for specific snack applications, from extruded products to baked goods.
- **T:** Could create application specialist teams with hybrid technical-commercial capabilities.
- **H:** Might establish structured co-development frameworks with priority customers.
- **S:** Could implement methodologies connecting consumer wellness demands to specific functional attributes.

Hypothetical Outcome: Potentially increased adoption by health-conscious brands, higher average inclusion rates, and accelerated pipeline conversion from concept to commercialization.

Hypothetical Scenario 2: Clean Label Dairy Formulations

Hypothetical Situation: A specialty ingredient supplier might need to pivot from synthetic stabilizing systems to clean label alternatives for dairy applications. Despite having technically viable solutions, such a supplier could face adoption challenges due to formulation complexity and implementation barriers.

Potential Guide Impact:

- **G:** Could create application-specific technical mapping of clean label challenges in yogurt, ice cream, and plant-based dairy alternatives.
- **U:** Might develop comprehensive clean label systems that reduce ingredient complexity while maintaining functionality.
- **I:** Could establish application support laboratories with virtual collaboration capabilities for on-demand formulation assistance.
- **D:** Might implement portfolio transformation strategy that maximizes returns from innovations while managing legacy ingredient transition.
- **E:** Could develop integrated regulatory-technical-commercial approaches that streamline reformulation decision processes.

Potential Paths Impact:

- **P:** Might create comparative demonstration protocols visualizing clean label performance parity with synthetic alternatives.
- **A:** Could tailor ingredient systems by product category and processing requirements.
- **T:** Might develop specialized knowledge centers to support customer education.
- **H:** Could establish joint innovation initiatives with dairy partners focused on clean label transformation.
- **S:** Might implement consumer acceptance testing methodologies to validate solutions against sensory expectations.

Hypothetical Outcome: Potentially accelerated clean label adoption across dairy categories, shorter time-to-market, and strengthened position in the clean label segment.

Hypothetical Scenario 3: Plant Protein Innovation Ecosystem

Hypothetical Situation: A plant protein ingredient supplier might face challenges expanding beyond basic nutritional positioning into broader formulation spaces. Limited application knowledge among customers could create barriers to adoption and innovation.

Potential Guide Impact:

- **G:** Might develop comprehensive protein functionality mapping across application categories, creating targeted value propositions beyond nutrition.
- **U:** Could create application-specific protein system solutions addressing taste, texture, and functionality challenges simultaneously.
- **I:** Might implement collaborative formulation programs supporting customers through development cycles.
- **D:** Could develop value-based pricing models tied to specific functionality improvements.
- **E:** Might create cross-functional innovation teams combining protein science, culinary expertise, and commercial insight.

Potential Paths Impact:

- **P:** Could establish culinary demonstration capabilities showcasing plant protein performance in applications.
- **A:** Might develop ingredient selection frameworks optimized for specific plant-based categories.
- **T:** Could create training programs to build customer capability in formulation techniques.
- **H:** Might establish co-development partnerships with complementary ingredient suppliers.
- **S:** Could implement methodologies connecting consumer acceptance patterns to formulation approaches.

Hypothetical Outcome: Potentially enhanced position in emerging plant-based applications, expanded technical project pipeline, and strengthened positioning through documented performance advantages.

Potential Outcomes from Route to Shopper® Deployments

Organizations that implement the **Route to Shopper®** Framework can expect significant commercial transformation:

Enhanced Customer Value Creation

- Stronger co-development partnerships based on shared innovation objectives
- More strategic customer relationships moving beyond procurement to true collaboration
- Accelerated formulation cycles through systematic application support

- Higher specification retention through integrated technical-commercial approaches

Superior Market Differentiation

- Enhanced connection between ingredient functionality and consumer benefits
- More compelling value propositions anchored in end-user preferences
- Stronger substantiation of technical claims and performance advantages
- Clearer articulation of cost-in-use benefits and total value contribution

Optimized Commercial Performance

- Higher-value portfolios focused on strategic application opportunities
- More effective resource allocation to highest-potential customers and segments
- Improved pricing sustainability through value-based negotiation approaches
- Increased specification rates in premium, innovation-driven applications

Accelerated Organizational Capability

- Stronger technical-commercial team alignment and collaborative capability
- Enhanced cross-functional cooperation across R&D, marketing, sales, and operations
- More effective knowledge transfer between technical experts and commercial teams
- Faster commercial translation of innovation into market-ready solutions

AI enablement in the Food Ingredients Industry

The **Route to Shopper®** Framework provides a structured foundation for AI integration into ingredient commercialization:

Predictive Analytics for Market-driven Innovation

- Automated trend scanning across scientific literature, patents, product launches, and consumer reviews
- Early identification of emerging application spaces and functionality demands
- Prediction of regulatory shifts and compliance requirements

- Anticipation of reformulation waves and category transformation opportunities

Formulation Intelligence Systems

- Ingredient-claim matchmaking engines connecting technical properties to commercial benefits
- Formulation compatibility analysis identifying synergistic ingredient combinations
- Processing parameter optimization for specific equipment configurations
- Cost-in-use modelling for value-based pricing justification

Enhanced Customer Engagement Tools

- Digital formulation assistants providing real-time guidance
- Virtual application testing simulations reducing physical testing requirements
- Sensory prediction models estimating consumer acceptance
- Sustainability impact calculators quantifying environmental benefits

Operational Excellence Enablers

- Automated knowledge management systems for technical information
- Intelligent sample fulfilment and tracking automation
- Smart project management tools for co-development initiatives
- Performance analytics dashboards for continuous optimization

Role of the Commercial Excellence Academy

As the creator of the **Route to Shopper®** Framework, the Commercial Excellence Academy serves as:

- **Strategic Navigator:** Guiding ingredient suppliers through commercial transformation journeys that connect technical excellence to market leadership
- **Capability Architect:** Designing integrated commercial systems that bridge scientific innovation and business outcomes
- **Knowledge Integrator:** Synthesizing cross-functional expertise into actionable commercial models
- **Implementation Partner:** Supporting practical deployment of framework elements with measurable business impact

Through comprehensive capability building programs, the Academy helps ingredient organizations develop:

- **Strategic Clarity:** Connecting ingredient capabilities to market opportunities
- **Executorial Excellence:** Translating strategic intent into systematic commercial practices
- **Collaborative Innovation:** Creating frameworks for co-development and partnership
- **Performance Optimization:** Building measurement systems that drive continuous improvement

Call to Action

For commercial and innovation leaders in the food ingredients industry, the **Route to Shopper®** Framework represents a strategic opportunity to:

Transform Commercial Capability

- Embed the **GUIDE-PATHS™** methodology as a strategic enabler in ingredient-to-customer strategy
- Adopt a common capability language across technical, regulatory, marketing, and sales functions
- Create systematic approaches to value creation that transcend traditional ingredient selling

Accelerate Innovation Impact

- Drive formulation innovation by connecting consumer insight to technical solutions
- Establish co-creation methodologies that leverage complementary expertise
- Develop systematic approaches to application expansion and category development

Future-proof Business Models

- Build resilient value propositions based on performance differentiation rather than cost
- Create sustainable advantage through integrated solutions rather than single ingredients
- Establish leadership platforms in emerging application spaces before they mature

The food ingredients industry stands at a pivotal moment where technical capability alone no longer ensures commercial success. By implementing the **Route to Shopper®** Framework, forward-thinking organizations can create sustainable advantage through superior customer value creation, systematic innovation approaches, and strategic commercial excellence.

Contact

To begin a strategic dialogue on implementing the **Route to Shopper®** Framework in your organization, please contact:

Strategic Partnerships Team

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