A Category Manager's Guide to Customer-Centric Retail

Better execution with customer insights at the core
Your Category was Down 2% Last Week

What will you do about it?

Realizing your category is losing share and knowing what to do about it are very different things. First, you need to understand the root causes. Did you have the right promotions? Is your private label losing its appeal? And if so, to whom? Do you know which shoppers you are losing or are they just less loyal?

As a category manager, you face many challenges and moving parts. With today’s shoppers having more choices than ever, every store must be exciting and precisely relevant – offering the right price, promotion, placement and product in the eyes of the consumer. Also, with the growing trend for convenience formats and the average store size forecasted to shrink 15% by 2022*, there will be an even higher premium on space and localized assortments to achieve category objectives.

-15%

While the Top 100 grocery retailers globally continue to add more stores, the average size of store operated is set to decline by 15% between 2017 and 2022.

I have to reduce SKUs by 10%, but how do I grow sales with less space?
Are my pricing policies leaking margin?
How do I easily model the impact my changes will have on margin and sales?

Source: Planet Retail, 2017.

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Customer-Centric Retail Works

But, how do you find the time?

Customer-centric retail is when you understand exactly what your customers are responding to and offering more of what appeals to them. Imagine if you could apply a customer-centric approach down to the store level. Each and every store would gain market share. It’s a game changer when you understand customer behavior at the store level and know what changes need to be made.

But you’re busy. How do you find the time to do it right? You may have access to lots of data sources and research, but do you have the time to review it all and figure out what works for your shoppers and what is missing the mark?
Challenges are Mounting for Category Managers

Get it done right and at a faster pace.

Category managers face increased pressure to accelerate decision making to drive more relevant category propositions and stimulate growth. The challenges are daunting:

1. Category performance changes daily and it is critical to stay on top of the root causes.
2. Multiple data sources can reflect different category stories. Finding the most relevant opportunities takes time.
3. Identifying the shopper appeal of each element of your category offer is complex.
4. Modelling new category propositions to understand sales and margin impact requires time and resources.
5. Using customer insights to localize category plans requires store level granularity which is time consuming and costly.
Drive Customer and Store Connected Category Management

Make it a strategic differentiator.

In the past, solutions have only addressed specific elements of the process rather than holistically managing category evaluation, planning and retail execution. This creates a disconnect in organizations - hindering collaboration with suppliers and with other internal departments.

What if you could accurately predict item sales down to the store level to understand the impact of every action you take? When you have a holistic approach that streamlines everything for category evaluation, planning and retail execution while also supporting easy collaboration with suppliers and colleagues at every stage, it transforms category management into a strategic differentiator.

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Introducing The Category Manager’s Suite

A single platform to view your category and how your customers shop.

- Improve decisions with easy access to market, customer and merchandising data
- Gain a complete 360° view of your customers
- Uncover growth opportunities and evaluate the health of your categories
- Connect departments, stores and suppliers on a single, collaborative platform
- Embed joint business planning capabilities to plan more effectively with suppliers
- Produce guaranteed-to-fit assortments reflecting customer relevancy and on-shelf availability
- Optimize and execute different price and promotion propositions
- Access and manage every category project through guided workflows
- Gain visibility into supply chain inventory and the impact of category initiatives

39%
Retailers that differentiate products and assortment offerings based on individual omni-channel shoppers.

The Category Manager’s Suite connects and streamlines the daily category management processes with proven tools and approaches to drive more trips and larger, more profitable baskets.

**Score Carding and Compliance**
Understand variances between plan vs. actual in store to drive future strategy and objective building cycles.

**Inventory and Supply Chain Visibility**
Connect to and gain visibility of inventory for best practice planning and improved on-shelf availability.

**Assortment and Space Optimization**
Build category assortments that are space, customer and inventory aware – all relevant to your most valuable customer and are easily executable.

**Category Insight and Strategy**
Provide shared access to a single, 360-degree understanding of your customers for easy collaboration and accurate execution.

**Joint Business Planning**
Apply collaborative Joint Business Planning to increase organizational visibility and speed to market - enabling relevant tasks and responsibilities to be assigned to internal and external employees to align with organizational strategy.

**Promotion Planning and Evaluation**
Leverage forecasting and what-if scenarios to streamline the promotion planning process. Evaluate every promotion down to individual item, store and day level.

**Price Planning and Monitoring**
Gain better understanding of the impact of price changes to improve strategies for driving sales and margin growth.

**Consolidated Customer & Market Data**

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Global Retailers See Results from A Customer-Centric Approach

76% Increase in availability after space optimization

+2.1% Sales lift in categories with supplier collaboration

2-3% Sales increase from localized assortments

+4 points Price Perception

Sources: Based on Symphony RetailAI projects.
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Drive Category Management Success with Symphony RetailAI

Increase trips and baskets from your best customers with the Symphony RetailAI Category Manager’s Suite. The solution delivers a 5P approach to category management to support organizational agility, productivity, collaboration, promotional effectiveness, space efficiency, price profitability, customer centric assortments and inventory availability.

Some of the most progressive retailers across the globe rely on our advanced solutions that put customer insights at the center of every decision. True customer-centric category management.

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