

## Promotional Strategy, by Hartey Berg

It's been my experience that working as a Sales and Marketing Broker while collaborating with multiple brands to develop and execute annual retailer promotions presents a range of inherent challenges. I have often run into challenges that span across various areas, including brand alignment, communication, execution, and measurement. Here are the key areas that I focus on:

### 1. Brand Alignment and Differentiation

- **Challenge:** When working with multiple brands, ensuring each brand's unique identity, voice, and objectives are maintained while still being able to create cohesive promotions can be difficult. Balancing the brand messaging across promotions can lead to confusion or dilution of each brand's individual intended strategy.
- **Solution:** I provide clear communication and strategy sessions with each brand at the start of the process - critical to ensure that their objectives align with the brands, distributors and retailer's goals. I define key brand touchpoints and maintaining consistency across different brands to help avoid overlap.

### 2. Coordinating with Multiple Stakeholders

- **Challenge:** Managing relationships with various brands, distributors and a retailer introduces complexity. Each brand has different priorities, budgets, marketing needs, and timelines, while the retailer has its own set of criteria for promotions, such as inventory concerns, target audiences, and logistical constraints.
- **Solution:** I deploy strong project management skills, such as setting clear timelines, expectations, and check-ins, are essential. Having one person (or a core team) overseeing the coordination between all parties helps streamline decision-making.

### 3. Balancing Competing Priorities

- **Challenge:** The goals of the brands may not always align with the retailer's or distributors goals, and sometimes the interests of individual brands may conflict with each other when promoting at the same time. Managing the fine line between promoting different brands while avoiding conflicts can be tricky.
- **Solution:** I prioritize clear communication and shared goals. If conflict arises, focus on crafting strategies where all brands can benefit. For example, leveraging non-competing categories or using different messaging for each brand to target distinct consumer segments.

### 4. Complexity in Creating Cross-Brand Promotions

- **Challenge:** Designing annual retailer promotions that cross over all marketing areas (such as digital, in-store, demos, and print) requires creating synergy between various types of media and promotional tactics.

- **Solution:** Cross-functional collaboration is key here. Marketing teams from both the brands, distributors and the retailer should work together to ensure that each channel (social media, in-store displays, email campaigns, etc.) is being utilized effectively for each brand in the promotion.

## 5. Retailer Buy-in and Alignment

- **Challenge:** Convincing the retailer to fully commit to a promotion can be a significant challenge. Retailers often have their own budget constraints, operational limitations, and internal processes that may not align with the goals of the brand or the promotion.
- **Solution:** I build strong relationships with retail partners by presenting data-driven proposals that show how the promotion will drive sales, increase traffic, or enhance customer loyalty. Offering incentives or flexible terms can help garner buy-in.

## 6. Budget and Resource Allocation

- **Challenge:** Budget management can be difficult when there are multiple brands involved, each with its own budgetary constraints. Balancing the allocation of funds between creative, media, and executional needs for each brand while ensuring the promotion is financially viable can get complicated.
- **Solution:** I collaboratively develop a master budget that reflects the needs of all brands and the retailer. Setting clear priorities, understanding cost-effective marketing solutions, and being flexible with budget distribution is crucial for success.

## 7. Tracking and Measuring Results

- **Challenge:** Measuring the effectiveness of the promotions can be complex, especially when multiple brands are involved. Understanding the ROI for each individual brand within a multi-brand promotion is often challenging, particularly if data isn't collected in a standardized way.
- **Solution:** I work to develop a clear, measurable framework for success. This could include setting KPIs for each brand (sales volume, traffic, brand awareness) and ensuring that tracking mechanisms (such as digital analytics and sales data) are in place. Post-promotion evaluations should be conducted regularly to assess what worked and what didn't.

## 8. Retailer and Brand Data Integration

- **Challenge:** Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting data from both the retailer and the brands can be time-consuming and sometimes inconsistent. Retailers may have their own reporting systems, and different brands may not always share data in a compatible format.
- **Solution:** I encourage standardization of reporting metrics. This could involve creating shared data dashboards or systems where both brands and retailers input relevant data in real time. The goal is to create visibility for all parties involved.

## 9. Logistical and Operational Hurdles

- **Challenge:** The operational side of promotions, including stock allocation, inventory management, distribution, and in-store execution, can be difficult to coordinate with multiple brands. Any errors or delays could impact the effectiveness of the promotion.
- **Solution:** I ensure that a solid operational plan is in place and regularly communicate with retailers to monitor stock levels, promotional materials, and in-store execution. I set deadlines for each step in the process to keep everyone aligned.

## 10. Consumer Behavior and Market Trends

- **Challenge:** Predicting the impact of a promotion on consumer behavior is not always easy. Market trends, economic conditions, and shifting consumer preferences can all affect the success of a promotion. Working with multiple brands and a retailer amplifies the uncertainty.
- **Solution:** I leverage consumer insights using past promotion data, and trends to design adaptable promotions. I stay agile and be ready to pivot if consumer reactions are not as anticipated.

## 11. Post-Promotion Analysis

- **Challenge:** Once the promotion is completed, evaluating its success and determining the ROI can be tough, especially if data is spread across different systems or stakeholders. Without a unified analysis, it's hard to derive actionable insights for future promotions.
- **Solution:** I consider best-in-class tools and platforms that allow for centralized reporting and analysis of promotional data. I collect feedback from both brands and retailers to gain insights on the execution process and customer engagement, and use this information to refine future strategies.

## Conclusion

My success has come from navigating these challenges through excellent communication, project management, and analytical skills, all while keeping a strategic eye on the bigger picture. It's about creating synergy between all parties and ensuring that each promotion is executed smoothly, delivers measurable results, and supports the overall business goals of both brands and retailers.