



## STAND OUT, GET IN

Shelf-back thinking with a uniform vision will get you in front of your desired supermarket consumer says **Kirsty Dollisson**, general manager, marketing and commercial, TorchMedia.

**R**etailers and FMCG manufacturers have one very important thing in common – the shopper. They both want the same thing: to draw the shopper in to the store, to please them, to make them love the experience and return for more.

So why is there still a disconnect between brand building and shopper marketing? Why is traditional consumer marketing considered separately to retail initiatives, which are largely thrown into the tactical rather than strategic marketing basket?

The coming together of these two disciplines is where the future lies for marketers, with the shopper as the champion and the brand as the final victory. The supermarket has an increasingly important role to play.

Supermarkets set the stage for the brand story, in particular that important scene in the plot where the shopper makes the choice to sacrifice one thing for another, or chooses to try both. It is this moment where it all comes together for the marketing function.

For this reason, it is essential that there is dialogue across the different 'facets' of FMCG marketing – the brand teams, the category trade teams, the agencies, the retailers and the media suppliers. Shopper and

consumer objectives should be treated equally and actioned together. This holistic approach leads to a result that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

The shopper experience, creating and delivering that experience is important on so many levels. A positive shopping experience reinforces the commitment not only to the retailer but also the manufacturers. If the consumer experience of using the product is similarly positive, then the flow-on benefits are enormous.

So how are brands delivering on shelf-back thinking and telling their story in the supermarket?

In reality it's a combination of many things, but they should all be linked together under the same overarching umbrella. From the packaging, to the point of sale livery, to experiential promotions – anything that brings the brand and shopper closer together needs to work in conjunction with marketing outside of the store. While the shopper and the consumer are different, they cannot be detached artificially.

Consider this: a brand in a highly price-driven category – in this example condiments or sauces – develops an extensive campaign including



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humorous, emotive television and radio spots, a social media competition and sponsorship of a cooking show.

Meanwhile, a shopper enters the supermarket ready to do a super stock-up shop, which includes buying sauce for the pantry at home. She gets to the condiments aisle and is confronted with a huge amount of choice at the shelf. The aforementioned brand is easily undercut on price by its competitors and we know that this shopper is seeking value over and above any other driver.

How does this campaign ‘work’ at the shelf? Was there shelf-back thinking right from the start of the planning process? Has the consumer and the shopper been considered in the same breath?

These are the questions that we need to ask and these are the questions that are answered by a shelf-back planning process. If the brand has a story, then it must be told in the aisle and it must be delivered appropriately.

The appropriateness of the message is determined by the shopper, their behaviour, their motivations and their need state. These characteristics should dictate not only the tone of the message, but also the content. In the previous example, a combination of functional and value benefits would need to be addressed and communicated, with the inclusion of a brand orientated visual stimulus. This combination of addressing ‘value fear’ and delivering emotive branding would create a positive response to win over the shopper – it would give her a reason to buy a great brand.

At the other end of the scale, consider another type of shopper. He is male, he knows what he wants and he wants to go into the supermarket and get it as quickly as possible – let’s say he is on a mission to buy deodorant. He isn’t going to linger the way our previous example would, and he is going to care much less about price and much more about the brand, what it stands for and what it will offer him in terms of an end result. The communication at the shelf should reflect this style of commando shopping, carrying the out-of-store brand message into the aisle with a big, bold and direct tone.

These shoppers may sound like stereotypes (and they are), but the more stereotypes that you build, the clearer the picture becomes, enabling you to more closely refine your campaign.

The picture needs to be clear, not only for ‘shopper marketers’ but for everyone involved in marketing the product. **M**