

# How trade marketing can be a win-win solution for B2B and B2C

By [Mike Smollan](#)

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It's been said that without a consumer at the shelf, shopper-marketing becomes like the proverbial tree falling in a forest, with no-one there to hear it - making the case for solid marketing strategies in retail across all levels. Shopper marketing on the one hand that is focused on the buyer, and on the other, trade marketing that is focused on building relationships with those who can help get products in front of shoppers. The latter being a wider marketing discipline that aims to increase demand with supply chain partners.



Mike Smollan, Chief Growth Officer at Smollan

The two are not mutually exclusive, instead they complement each other. Working together to create a clear and consistent retail experience that benefits both consumers and trade partners.

Talking all things trade, retail brand journo [Matt Press said](#),

*“ It's critical for manufacturers to market their stuff because retailers obviously have millions of products to choose from when they're deciding what's going to be worth selling. After all, there's only so much shelf space, right? Trade marketing tactics could prove to be the difference between a retailer choosing one product to sell over another. ”*

## Benefits and challenges

In Press's opinion, the key benefits include generating more purchases at supply chain level, and in so doing, ensuring that the supply of your products can always meet demand. Furthermore, if your marketing is good enough, retailers will always promote your products and it can even help a business stay profitable if perhaps they don't have a good idea of who their end user is.

Other benefits include brands gaining a stronger voice and presence, the opportunity for scalability for large and small businesses as well as creating a more competitive edge, building a wider market and ultimately, increasing product demand.



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This type of marketing relies on insights from market research, economics, and analytics, providing trade partners with incentives, support and information that helps them sell a product or brand. This can include trade shows, sales training, merchandising, in-store displays, online specials, strategic partnerships, pricing, and even loyalty programmes that increases the partner's profitability and builds longevity in terms of alliances.

When done well, it has huge benefits for companies but also for consumers as it encourages brands to design a better offer and promote on point customer experiences.

That said, it can also be tricky as one has to stay sharp. There was a [Nielsen study](#) that found that less than half of all trade promotions fail to increase brand or category growth – that's a biggie.

To succeed, there needs to be a clear understanding of the market and innovative ways used to keep promotions fresh and exciting. Comms need to be consistently on point using eye catching designs, relationships built with trade partners and metrics put in place to make sure you're hitting the sweet spot.



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## E-commerce

So too, it's about keeping up with the latest trends and having visibility across all channels. An online trade marketing strategy these days is a no brainer - on social media, via email, content marketing as well as websites. At the same time despite the digital advantage, being clear about never forgetting to allow for close and frequent contact with partners. Digital marketers agree that trade marketing in e-commerce is particularly important as it's a space where competition is high, and products are easily substitutable.

## Artificial intelligence

According to Quartz Sales, as we shape-shift on the regular these days, thanks to the use of advanced tech such as AI offering new solutions to old problems, this branch of marketing is moving to a new level. In a space where there is an expectation of getting quick and efficient answers to questions, AI solutions (for example ChatGPT) can assist consumers quickly, effortlessly and in real time.

So too, AI is transforming other areas of trade marketing, one being market segmentation, where large amounts of data can be processed, and patterns identified. Based on the results, specific products and promotions can be offered to groups of consumers who behave in a similar way.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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